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Navigating with East Asian Volunteer Tourists:  
Moral Landscape, Community, Transformation

Yim Ming (Connie) Kwong

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Geography  
Durham University

2019



## *Abstract*

This study aims to re-conceptualise volunteer tourism through wider theoretical questions and analytical approach in order to contribute to developing a more holistic theoretical framework for understanding volunteer tourism. This thesis is premised primarily on the question: ‘why do individuals travel as volunteers?’ Focusing on volunteer tourists from Hong Kong and Taiwan, this thesis seeks to unpack how volunteer tourism becomes a social trend. As a choice of travelling, taking part in volunteer tourism is not just a discrete choice of a single volunteer tourist. It is a prevailing choice from the overarching, complex ethical terrain in which an individual chooses to do things from a particular instilled position. This instilled position emerges from the interplay of neoliberal constructions and responsabilisation through institutionalised service obligation in schools that encourage students to extend care to distant others alongside the culturally rooted ethical dispositions that inform developing oneself by taking up more responsibilities. This social trend also manifests the search for rebuilding social ties that can be actualised through being part of moral communities and new ways of being through distancing from the ‘familiar’ and critical self-reflection in the ‘unfamiliar’. This moves the conceptualisation of volunteer tourism beyond the absolute dichotomy between altruism and self-interest to the broader discussion around ways of being and becoming a moral self. This study also offers a ‘post-normative’ analytical framework to understand how a good self is cultivated, experienced and re-invented through volunteer tourism. On the one hand, it draws together the concepts to examine the active and conscious technologies of the self, unconscious dispositions and the notion of quality which play out for the development of the self towards an ethical subject. On the other hand, it links up the concepts of community, liminality and geographies of care to investigate the meaning and formation of the moral self in a collective setting. This study further contributes to this theoretical framework by widening the discussion to a non-Western context. The finding of this research shows that in Chinese societies in East Asia, developing a good self is the choice as well as the outcome, which is slightly different from the Western responsabilisation. This study contributes to the current responsabilisation as well as alternative tourism or ethical tourism literature by looking at the complex ethical and cultural framework in which individuals choose to do things from particular dispositions rather than positing individuals to make discrete choices. The way that these Asian volunteers conceive volunteer tourism, as informed by their traditional values, helps to re-orientate from sending aid to change poor people’s lives to sharing and exchange which may also help to disorientate volunteers’ subjectivities. This responds to the urge for ‘Asianising the field’ through more research on the emerging phenomenon of Asian tourists/tourism within Asia.



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## *List of Abbreviations*

CYA	Cambodia Youth Action
ELIV	ELIV International Service
HKCDC	Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council
HKU	The University of Hong Kong
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OLE	Other learning experiences
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TaiwanICDF	International Cooperation and Development Fund
TBW	The Bucket Wish

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## *Acknowledgements*

This journey is not easy at all. On top of my interest in Geography and the topic of this research, people providing enormous inspirations and support are undeniably significant in making this thesis accomplished. It is the time to express my gratitude to those have made this journey fruitful and joyful.

First and foremost, I am truly grateful to my supervisors – Mike Crang and Simone Abram – for their mentorship, support and encouragement. When I first contacted Mike with a research proposal, his prompt and positive reply with great interest gave me a lot of confidence. I am thankful for this precious opportunity of working with him. Throughout the PhD journey, Mike and Simone have always inspired me through our discussions and their commentary on my work. They have also given me continued support and freedom in achieving my other pursuits for bettering myself. This thesis would have never been possible without their unreserved guidance, encouragement, sharing and patience.

My research informants from Hong Kong and Taiwan were also tremendously significant for this accomplishment. Without them, this research would have never been completed successfully in the way it was. I am glad that they were not just my informants; we have become friends. I also appreciate the help received from the two organisations for my fieldwork.

A lot of amazing and lovely friends and colleagues have backed me up generously. Zahra and Marcin have made this journey more special, as they have given me a second family. All the trips we have made, endless love and encouragement given to each other, companionship or just being there for me can never be expressed in words. I am also very happy to be part of the postgraduate community which has given me a lot of inspirations and care from our academic and social events in the postgraduate offices, Manley Room and outside the Department. Thanks to the GCP brigade – Jarno, Jiunn, Leah, Marianna and Xiaoxiao – this journey has become more enjoyable with all the laughter we have had. Our friendship has meant so much to me. Special thanks to María Paz Lira-Bahamonde for her help with making the maps. I also want to thank Sandy, Siu Chu, Timo and Paula for their encouragement and moral support. They were not physically around most the time but shared many of my ups and downs; their messages and our long chats whenever we met had cheered me up. Sandy's support specifically in the last two weeks of my writing was tremendously significant. I am also grateful to friends who sent me little messages from different parts of the world. Although many of them did not understand the life of pursuing the PhD, their support and blessings brightened my days. All these people have made this journey not lonely at all.

I also want to show my gratitude to different sources of funding. Without the postgraduate scholarship from the Sir Robert Black Trust Fund in Hong Kong, True Light Scholarship from my secondary school True Light Girls' College, Global Citizenship Programme Scholarship from Ustinov College, postgraduate stipend from the Department of Geography in Durham, and PhD grant from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, I could not have done this doctorate. Awards received from the Norman Richardson Postgraduate Research Fund and departmental Postgraduate Conference Fund also assisted me to complete my fieldwork and disseminate research findings in conferences. I am thankful for various kinds of support I have received from the Department. Special thanks to Kathy Wood who has always been helpful, understanding and kind.

Last but not least, I want to say thank you to my dearest family – my parents and sister. I want to show my deepest gratitude to their unconditional support, encouragement, care and patience. They are always my support for academic and personal growth. My parents have supported me for pursuing my dream without doubt, while my sister has been looking after my parents so I could do it without worries. My cousins and adorable nephews made my days sweeter and happier when I needed a break as well.



## *Prologue*

In an afternoon in April of 2013, several of us were in the postgraduate hub in the University of Hong Kong (HKU), Colleague-A started saying, ‘we should do something meaningful’. We agreed; we asked what we should do. He then suggested setting up an NGO doing something in developing countries such as Cambodia. I was interested in the idea as I had wanted to do it for long time. We were brainstorming how to do it and where we could get funding. However, when speaking of commitment, Colleague-B was not sure where he would be after the summer as by then he should have submitted his thesis, while Colleague-C was not sure if she could be off from her MPhil studies for long enough to go on a service trip because of her strict supervisor. Eventually, only Colleague-A and I were working to look for funding opportunities from the University. We met the student advising officer, and drafted a proposal, although in the end I did not join the founding committee of this student-led not-for-profit organisation. While waiting for the advising officer outside her office, we saw a lot of event posters recruiting participants for ‘service trip’ to China, South East Asia and Africa, and ‘cultural exchange and volunteering programme’ to Eastern Europe and China. Colleague-A’s focus was having so many ‘competitors’ as he pointed to how cheap it was for a 2-week cultural exchange programme in Belarus (around £500, all inclusive). I was surprised; at the same time I was also amazed by how full the event notice board was as I had never realised the swamp of such extra-curriculum activities on campus until then, although we always heard about experiential learning, service learning, and global citizenship (embodied in a compulsory credit-bearing module called Global Citizenship in my undergraduate Faculty).

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On our way back from the meeting with the student advising officer, Colleague-A and I were talking about conducting some research work alongside organising the community development projects. ‘Yes, why don’t I look into this phenomenon of volunteer tourism as it is so popular among university students in Hong Kong?’ While interested in knowing about life(styles) in rural Cambodia, I was additionally tempted by the concept of volunteering overseas itself.

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This tells how I stepped into the field of volunteer tourism.



# **Chapter 1 Introduction:**

## **Embarking through Volunteer Tourism**

### **1.1 Volunteer tourism as an alternative**

Tribe (2009) has questioned why tourism has been under-philosophised with regard to aesthetics and virtues. Fennell (2006b) also states that researchers who are concerned with the role of tourism in shaping beauty and virtue in the world tend to articulate this concern through studying tourism impacts rather than through deeper philosophically-informed discussions of ethics and morality. The subject has been studied independently by disciplines such as anthropology, geography, sociology, psychology, economics, and management, resulting in different epistemological trajectories of engaging with moral concerns (Caton, 2012). Caton (2012) has advocated a ‘moral turn’ in tourism studies having identified a space for overt discussions of morality and ethics in tourism with recent works such as Tribe (2002, 2009), Macbeth (2005), Fennell (2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2009), Smith (2009), Jamal and Menzel (2009), Feighery (2011), and Pritchard, Morgan, and Ateljevic (2011). This growth in literature is characterised by increasing research into forms of tourism, which are imbued with ethical orientations with the potential of rectifying the negative impacts of mass tourism, such as ecotourism, volunteer tourism, and community-based tourism (Caton, 2012; Sin, Oakes, & Mostafanezhad, 2015; Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Butcher (2014) has commented on the contemporary moralisation of tourism. The rise of forms of tourism such as responsible, ethical, and green each indicate a moral stance in relation to development issues and environmental responsibility, drawing heavily on personal qualities such as care, responsibility, justice, and consciousness (Butcher, 2014). The link between personal qualities and social outcomes is clearest in volunteer tourism, which Butcher (2014) labels as one of the alternative forms. Volunteer tourists are conceived as seeking a travel experience injected with the moral responsibility of work (Sin et al., 2015). The ‘gap year’ for British students or ‘The Big OE’ for Australasians is no longer about irresponsible ‘dropping out’; it is more about travelling as a global citizen, contributing to community development and the wellbeing of local communities through volunteer tourism (Lyons, Hanley, Wearing, & Neil, 2012). The terms ‘care’, ‘responsibility’, and ‘awareness’ have become prevalent in the advocacy for a more self-consciously moral choice of tourism (Butcher, 2003, 2014).

### 1.1.1 Re-emergence of volunteer tourism

Mass tourism has been blamed for causing various problems such as exceeding physical and social carrying capacity and wreaking damage on cultures exposed to tourists. These concerns have given rise to alternative tourism, moving towards more responsible, green, ethical, enlightened, and experiential practices (Moufakkir, 2012). The emergence of these new forms has moralised tourism so that they are deemed to be good for the local community, environment, and culture, while the tourists seeking enlightenment and encouragement are believed to find different ways of being and reflection in their own societies (Butcher, 2003). These new trends have not emerged uncriticised. Some commentators are frustrated by the exaggerated criticism of mass tourism (e.g. Butcher, 2003), while some examine the limitations of alternative tourism (e.g. Liu, 2003; Sharpley, 2010). Others lament not only the moral deficit in tourism but also in daily life (e.g. Smith & Duffy, 2003; as cited in Moufakkir, 2012). Given these new trends, ethics, morals, and responsibilities ought to be considered in tourism since they are acknowledged in various aspects of life (Sin & Minca, 2014). Volunteer tourism is one of the more ethical and responsible alternatives in response to tourists' demands for holidays for moral fulfilment and the fulfilment of social needs through contact with others, while it also provides opportunities for experiential travel. Although it has existed for many years, it has been noted that 'it was not until after the September 11<sup>th</sup> incident and the Indonesian Tsunami that more travellers started to think about this type of travel and the market came [sic] more aware of the opportunities to have a holiday that involved volunteering' (Nestora, Yeung, & Calderon, 2009; as cited in Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p.121).

Volunteer tourism is more accurately considered a re-emerging form of activity. Voluntary activities can be traced back to the altruistic and missionary movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Various institutions were set up over time to address social problems and promote social good, with some institutions relying on employees to volunteer their time (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Organisations such as the Voluntary Service Organisation and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers in the United Kingdom were established in the late 1950s and the Peace Corps in the United States in the early 1960s to promote domestic voluntary service<sup>1</sup>, giving rise to volunteerism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). However, service projects initiated by these organisations were more about activism than tourism, and more domestic than overseas. In the 1980s, concepts such as sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, and ecotourism emerged as alternatives to mass tourism. Meanwhile, the teaming up of the voluntary sector and tour operators in combining charity work with holidays proved

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<sup>1</sup> Voluntary service to the Voluntary Service Organisation and Peace Corps were also alternatives to military service.

successful, providing a new promotional outlet for the voluntary sector for their cause (Callanan & Thomas, 2005).

Originating primarily in the UK and Europe, the phenomenon has expanded into Australia, the US, and Asia, the latter being a more recent expansion. Both participation and research have grown rapidly over the past three decades; participants come from diverse origins and destinations are geographically more diverse (Vrasti, 2013), while the related body of academic literature is growing exponentially (McGehee, 2014; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Since 1990, when some 1.6 million individuals took part in volunteer tourism projects in developing countries annually (Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008), it is estimated that the total has grown closer to 10 million (McGehee, 2014). Volunteers usually take part in short-term programmes organised by ‘sending organisations’ which include not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises, private companies, universities, religious organisations, conservation agencies, and charities (Raymond & Hall, 2008). Wearing and McGehee (2013) conducted a Google search of the words ‘volunteer tourism’, the result for which increased from 230,000 hits on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 to 4,850,000 hits on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012, including publications, sending organisations, blogs, and other popular press. I performed the same search on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, returning 235,000,000 hits. Figure 1 also shows a sharp increase in academic searches in the late 90s and 2004 on Google Ngram Viewer which charts the frequency of searches for ‘volunteer tourism’ in Google Books<sup>2</sup>. Such substantial growth both in industry and academia is worthy of attention.

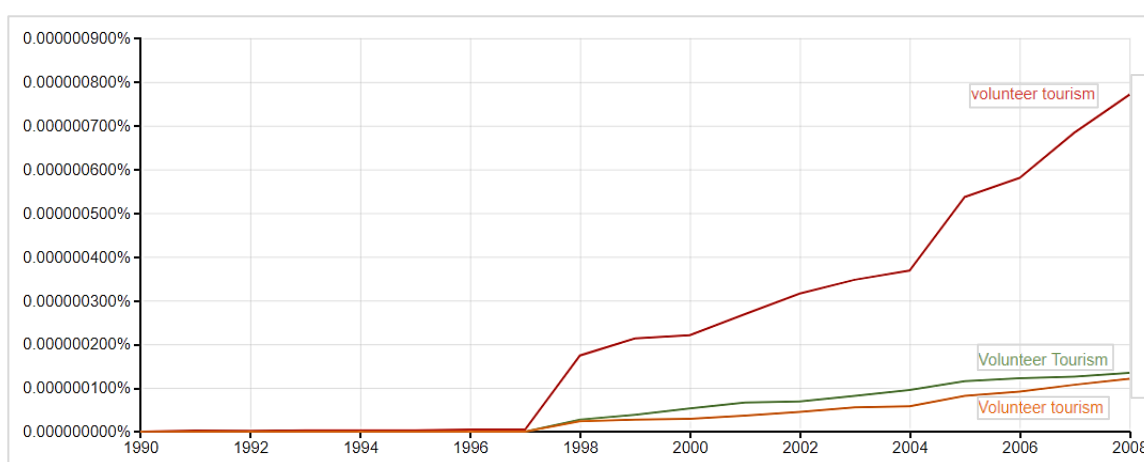


Figure 1 Google Ngram showing frequency of searches for 'volunteer tourism' in Google Books, 1990-2008

<sup>2</sup> I conducted the search using three comma-separated phrases: ‘volunteer tourism’, ‘Volunteer tourism’ and ‘Volunteer Tourism’. Google Ngram Viewer only populated the database from sources up to 2008.

Wearing (2001) defines volunteer tourists as ‘those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment’ (p. 1). He also regards volunteer tourism ‘as a development strategy leading to sustainable development and centering the convergence of natural resource qualities, locals and the visitors that all benefit from tourism activity’ (p. 12). Central to this definition is that volunteer tourism brings positive impacts to the environment or host communities as well as intrinsic rewards or positive changes in volunteer tourists. This definition has been widely adopted in subsequent research on volunteer tourism, but some variations have also been added to reflect different foci on actors and experiences. For example, Brown (2005) identifies this type of tourism from an industry perspective as an ‘experience where a tour operator offers travellers an opportunity to participate in an optional excursion that has a volunteer component, as well as a cultural exchange with local people (p. 480). McGehee and Santos (2005) also view volunteer tourism as an activity of ‘utilizing discretionary time and income to go out of the regular sphere of activity to assist others in need’ (p. 760).

The conceptualisation of volunteer tourism has been further expanded by the emergence of associated terms. Under the umbrella term ‘volunteer tourism’, there are various forms. For example, ‘voluntourism’ emphasises the combination of volunteering and tourism experiences as ‘the conscious, seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination and the best, traditional elements of travel – arts, culture, geography, history and recreation – in that destination’ (Voluntourism.org, 2014; as cited in Wearing & McGehee, 2013). On the other end of the spectrum sits international volunteering which refers to spending organised periods of time to carry out voluntary work with minimal focus on the touristic elements (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Lorimer, 2010; Schech, 2017). Following the trend of sustainable tourism, other specialty forms of volunteer tourism have arisen, such as WWOOFing<sup>3</sup> (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2016; Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014) and domestic forms of volunteer tourism (McGehee & Andereck, 2008).

As volunteer tourism re-emerged in opposition to or as a solution to the negative impacts of mass tourism, it has been placed in slightly different academic typologisations of the proliferation of types of tourism in a post-mass tourism era. It has been largely placed as a form of alternative tourism (Singh, 2002; Uriely, Reichel, & Ron, 2003; Wearing, 2001); ecotourism or its extension (Gray & Campbell, 2007; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011); new moral tourism (Butcher, 2003); niche tourism (Callanan & Thomas, 2005); serious tourism/leisure

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<sup>3</sup> WWOOF refers to World Wide (or Willing Workers) Opportunities on Organic Farms, originally known as Working Weekends on Organic Farms. WWOOFing involves guest-volunteers receiving room and board at a host farm and learning organic farming or horticulture by working several hours a day. WWOOF embodies a combination of agri-tourism and volunteer tourism.

(Stebbins, 1996; Wu, Wall, & Tsou, 2017); conscious or transmodern tourism (Ateljevic & Tomljenovic, 2016); philanthropic/justice/pro-poor/goodwill tourism (Butcher & Smith, 2010; Novelli, Morgan, Mitchell, & Ivanov, 2016); or a kind of ethical consumption.

These different definitions and typologies reflect the messiness of the outgrowth of the literature and the lack of, or search for, a more systematic and organised definition, conceptualisation, and methodology. Untapped potential amidst theories of political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, political ecology, economics, and psychology has been noted and further exploration encouraged (McGehee, 2014; Sin et al., 2015; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). As a discipline, geography is well-positioned to examine volunteer tourism due to its extensive system of sub-fields. Social and cultural geography has focused extensively on the geography of compassion, care, and responsibility (e.g. Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Baillie Smith, Laurie, & Griffiths, 2018; Laurie & Baillie Smith, 2018; Mostafanezhad, 2012, 2014, 2017; Noxolo, Raghuram, & Madge, 2012). Development geography tends to explore Global North-Global South relations, geographical imaginaries, and power relations in the context of international volunteering (e.g. Baillie Smith et al., 2018; Chen, 2018; Laurie & Baillie Smith, 2018; Schech, 2017; Schech, Mundkur, Skelton, & Kothari, 2015). Some have examined how volunteer tourism is viewed as a development tool and its failures to function in this way (e.g. Guttentag, 2009; Simpson, 2004), which is then skewed to look at the motivations, impacts, and outcomes of volunteer tourism as a form of travel (a long list as summarised and analysed in the next section). Economic geography has also associated it with the neoliberal moral economy (e.g. Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011; Griffiths, 2015; Vrasti, 2013). It is acknowledged that these themes of discussion have produced solid research by utilising different perspectives such as critical theory, conflict theory, social movement theory, postcolonial theory, community capital theory, interactionalist theory, and governmentality theory, to name but a few (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). These approaches in geography and its sub-disciplines have shown various possibilities for widening the discussion and avoiding limiting the field to volunteer tourism as a form of travel.

### 1.1.2 Current lines of research

The literature has focused on several theoretical lines of research. There is an extensive body of research on pre-trip motivations of volunteer tourists. One of the primary foci is examining how motivations for taking part in volunteer tourism are different from those of mainstream tourists (e.g. Benson & Seibert, 2009; Broad & Jenkins, 2008; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2011; Grimm & Needham, 2012; Lo & Lee, 2011; Sin, 2009; Söderman & Snead, 2008; Tomazos & Butler, 2010; Weaver, 2015). This leads to the categorisation of types of volunteer tourists (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Wymer Jr, Self, & Findley, 2010)

and further to debates on the dichotomy between altruism and self-interest. Such research pivots the debate around whether participants are altruistic or self-interested based on the ethical claim that sets volunteer tourism apart from mainstream tourism (e.g. Brown, 2005; Coghlan & Fennell, 2009; Fennell, 2006a; Grimm & Needham, 2012; Mustonen, 2007; Singh, 2002; Tomazos & Butler, 2010, 2012). Some researchers (e.g. Hustinx, 2001; Tomazos & Butler, 2010) maintain that not all tourists are born to be altruistic, so it is sensible to position them at any point on the continuum between altruism and self-interest. This also opens up the variety of experiences they could have rather than thinking in terms of an absolute dichotomy. Despite this, this area of research tends to busy the literature with inexhaustive lists of self-reported motivations, and focuses on individual tourists. While this reveals discrete motivations and choices, it pays little attention to broader meanings of choice and practice, resulting in a loose and general model and framework of volunteer tourism. Previous studies have rarely considered what frames such motivations. In other words, what do these motivations mean in volunteer tourists' ethical sensibilities in their daily life? And how is participating in volunteer tourism as an ethical action informed by those ethical sensibilities? Therefore, instead of asking 'Why does a tourist travel?' and 'Why does someone volunteer?' we should go further to ask 'How are these values enacted through and during travelling as a volunteer tourist?' Examining why volunteer tourism has become an appropriate form of activity allows a more nuanced understanding and account of the wider ethical and cultural framework.

Another strand of research considers on the impacts and outcomes on host communities, volunteer tourists, or the host-guest relationship (e.g. Coghlan, 2015; Conran, 2011; Frazer & Waitt, 2016; Guttentag, 2009; Holmes & Smith, 2010; Lepp, 2008; McGehee & Andereck, 2009; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Mostafanezhad, 2016; Mostafanezhad, Azizi, & Johansen, 2016; Zahra & McGehee, 2013). Earlier research focused on how volunteer tourism is potentially beneficial (e.g. Broad, 2003; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Pan, 2012, 2017; Singh, 2002; Zahra, 2010; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). Criticisms of the pitfalls of volunteer tourism have been seen as the research expands to scrutinise just how much benefit it offers to the destination environments or communities (e.g. Conran, 2011; Devereux, 2008; Guttentag, 2009; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Mostafanezhad, 2013; Palacios, 2010; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Simpson, 2004; Sin, 2009, 2010; Tomazos & Butler, 2010). Another significant strand of work identifies issues surrounding power and the exploitation of host communities (e.g. Butcher, 2003; Griffiths & Brown, 2016; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Palacios, 2010; Sin, 2009, 2010; Theerapappisit, 2009). Scholarship has also discussed the potential of volunteer tourism as a new form of colonialism or neo-colonialism which creates another layer of dependency (e.g. Caton & Santos, 2009; Guttentag, 2009; Lyons et al., 2012; Palacios, 2010; Vrasti, 2013). This relates to another aspect of this line of research on the commodification and marketing of volunteer tourism



programmes. Given the success of volunteer tourism and the sector's profitability, many commercial organisations have entered the market and existing organisations have changed from not-for-profits into commercial ventures (e.g. Coren & Gray, 2012; Cousins, 2007; Tomazos & Cooper, 2012; Wearing & Wearing, 2006). Such a shift in orientation may lead the sector to impact communities differently. Commercial organisations may be less established in the community and more focused on the benefit to and satisfaction of volunteer tourists who are their customers (e.g. Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Calkin, 2013; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Smith, 2014; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011; Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Considering negative impacts on the local community versus positive impacts on the volunteer tourists, researchers have examined ways of minimising harmful outcomes and maximising positive effects. They focus on good practices to ensure the sustainability of the activity, which is a key factor as the sending organisations play a significant role in the design of the projects aiming to impact host communities positively (e.g. Ellis, 2003; McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Spencer, 2008). For example, a community-centred approach (Broad, 2003; Zahra & McGehee, 2013), island-culture-based volunteer tourism development (Benson & Blackman, 2011), and transformative learning (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011) have been proposed to add value to the participant's experience as well as the potential positive impacts on the host community. As Wearing and McGehee (2013) point out, there are limited studies of the post-trip impacts of the volunteer tourism experience, although recent work has begun to address this (e.g. Bailey & Russell, 2010; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Grabowski, 2011; Lepp, 2008; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Zahra, 2010). This line of inquiry looking at impacts of the experience directs us to explore its transformational potential. There has been increasing discussion of transformative learning through volunteer tourism (see Sections 2.2.2 and 6.1). This approach explores the potential to maximise positive impacts both on the volunteers and local communities through changing volunteers' worldviews and everyday practices, rather than relying on changing the practices of the organisations they are sent by. In essence, this approach seeks a more holistic and foundational change in attitudes and behaviours which will lead to more positive or fewer negative impacts. This coincides with advocacy for conscious travel that taps into individuals' quest for meaning, self-development, and responsibility (Ateljevic & Tomljenovic, 2016; Ghisi, 2008). As a result, there has been growing interest in looking at whether and how volunteer tourism can effect change in the tourist's frames of reference and have a broader positive impact on self-development and proliferated responsibility.

This specifically speaks to the pedagogical calls which have been echoed by scholars but remain stagnant theoretically and methodologically. Henry (2019) has noticed the first call for pedagogy from the work of Simpson (2004). Simpson (2004) critiques the gap year programmes in constructing a public face of

development that encourages a perception of development as a simple matter and a ‘get on with it’ attitude. The value of western altruism or ‘doing something good’ embedded in the public face of development is expressed in the language of development used in marketing of the gap year industry and an image of a ‘third world other’ dominated by simplistic binaries of ‘us and them’ (Simpson, 2004). There is still a lack of frameworks of a pedagogy for social justice which probes the volunteer tourists to ponder ‘why there are global differences, or how people’s lives in different places intersect’ (Simpson, 2004, p. 690). A pedagogical call is particularly important as gap year is increasingly getting incorporated into formal educational and employment structures and institutions by being tied to formal education and better access to employment with a language of such as ‘success’ and ‘graduation’ (Simpson, 2005). Part of this call means that the volunteer tourists, including gappers, need an understanding of the broader issues in development, of which it refers to the development of appropriate attitudes that enables international volunteers to work with host communities without jeopardising the building of relationships by inappropriately assuming the role of providers of change, knowledge and skills (Hammersley, 2014, p. 870). This further reveals a niche area of research that requires attention to the ways that faith-based international volunteering connects with issues of poverty and development or discourses and practices of global citizenship. Witnessing and experiencing faith reflects certain modes of being and acting out subjectivities. Baillie Smith et al. (2013) have showed that religion has created space in generating new sets of social structures around imagined communities as well as tensions and contradictions that may negotiate global and cosmopolitan citizenships; however, it may also constrain such subjectivities due to limited avenue to express or church’s avoidance of political or social action. This encourages us to look into the multiple subjectivities of the volunteers in the context of particular social group experiences, identities, relationships and life course (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015). This also gauges the interest in seeing transition – transition from the volunteering experience back to everyday life. Hopkins et al. (2015) have identified a key challenge for many of the young people engaged in faith-based international volunteering in re-negotiating their sense of religious self on return having been ‘over there’ intensely in a religious group setting. Studies on transition from volunteers to activists or volunteers-cum-scholars are present (e.g. McGehee & Santos, 2005; more details in Section 2.2.1.5) but this line of inquiry is still under-researched (Henry, 2019). This requires further efforts to better understand this transition and what steps of a pedagogy of social justice entail to steer the volunteer tourists towards critical geographies.

Increasingly being articulated with development, broader insights could be sought from conceiving volunteer tourism as neoliberal governmentality, on top of a type of serious leisure or responsible tourism activity (Stebbins, 2001). Both volunteer tourists and scholars have been anxious regarding the failures of volunteer

tourism in living up to the norms of commitment and altruism, regardless of whether those tourists have effectively performed their ascribed governing roles as agents of development (see e.g. Guttentag, 2009; Lyons et al., 2012; Simpson, 2004). The rhetoric of self-making work, or ‘technologies of the self’ through caring for the distant others and enacting global responsibility, has successfully instilled morality into the choice of travel and experience to fulfil global citizenship and moral responsibilities. Volunteer tourists as a category of moral subjects thus embody new spaces of global governance. These global citizens are assumed to be responsible, compassionate, committed and intelligent; there is hardly a single portrayal of the connotated pleasure component which is often dismissed as an irresponsible pursuit of volunteer tourism. However, it is almost impossible to separate or extract pleasure from the analysis of actual volunteer tourism experiences, as it is clearly highly aesthetic and not pleasure-free when viewed as a form of ethical tourism (Sin et al., 2015). Therefore, these terms should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, although they have been treated as such, in order to reconcile this responsibility and pleasure, ethics and aesthetics. It could be constructive to explore, for example, the (dis)connection between how one travels as a volunteer and what one actually does, or what we are told about the pleasure from building a toilet in a developing country. This line shows an approach that moves beyond conceiving volunteer tourism from the discrete motivations, impacts, and outcomes that vary from one tourist to another. Rather, it leads us to interrogate the broader issues intersected and reflected in and through volunteer tourism.

Volunteer tourism being a development tool or the debate on its potential for driving sustainable development has received attention from and extensive research work done by industry players especially international NGOs. Hazeldine and Baillie Smith (2015) have suggested that following the proposal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is impossible to achieve these goals without engaging volunteers and volunteering components in the developing policy narratives of the goals. The potential contribution to SDGs and development in general could be first attributed to the scale of the current volunteering activities that bear particular resources and competence to reach and build capacity of local communities in various forms (Hazeldine & Baillie Smith, 2015). Burns (2015) has found that volunteers’ embeddedness within communities and organisations helps to create and foster personal bonds and relationships which are conducive to a different kind of collaboration and trust based on informal relationships. He has further highlighted that ‘volunteering can be an effective mechanism for reaching the poorest and most marginalised’ (Burns, 2015, p. 11). We are, however, reminded that the unique contribution of volunteers could be diminished when volunteers are presented as experts by sending organisations that perpetuates a one-way relationship, when these organisations enter local communities with pre-defined notions of solutions or exclusive consultation with community leaders, and when international and local volunteers are perceived

and valued differently or unequally based on their roles, knowledge and skills (Burns, 2015). Meanwhile, Hazeldine and Baillie Smith (2015) have pointed out that we should avoid assuming that volunteers, both international and local, would necessarily make positive contributions to the localising agenda if they are treated as cheap labour for project delivery or volunteers from certain communities or groups are excluded, on top of the paradox of increasing reliance on volunteers in development and simultaneous lack of recognition and training for volunteers for works that require high level of skills and knowledge. This requires design and implementation of projects that would not undermine the capacities of communities in resilience-building (UN Volunteers, 2018). Given the recognised roles of volunteering in long-term sustainable development and simultaneous limitations and critique of short-term international volunteering or volunteering tourism in contributing to development, it requires further efforts to answer the pedagogical calls to find out ‘what a geography of social justice embedded within and continuing beyond voluntourism could accomplish’ (Henry, 2019, p. 563) or how short-term volunteers are changed in terms of worldview and behaviour with the support by pedagogical work to continually act on the geographical imaginations and subjectivities.

## **1.2 Trend of volunteer tourism in Asia**

In 2012, I attended the launch ceremony of the Gallant Ho Experiential Learning Centre in HKU. The Centre was established to promote service learning with a generous donation by Dr. Gallant Ho, a supporter of public service. This establishment, together with the HKU SERVICE 100 Fund, supports HKU students to engage in local and overseas voluntary services. Walking along the corridors or podium of HKU’s campus, one cannot miss the walls of posters or booths set up by the student organisations inviting participation in service trips (Figure 2). This is a common sight on the walls across universities in Hong Kong: promoting service-learning trips with the promise of a meaningful and lifelong inspiration experience (Cheung, 2016). Particularly common among medical and nursing students, volunteering as an English teacher amongst all overseas service-learning projects is the most popular activity for university students in general.

Besides universities, social service and service learning are also widely promoted in secondary schools as extra-curriculum activities. I was a member of my school’s Student Social Service Club for five years. Our school organised a raffle-selling day as an ‘outside the classroom’ activity for three levels of students, and I was one of them. The Student Development Unit of my school also organised cultural exchange programmes with a volunteering component in China. All these could be attributed to the rise and increasing popularity of the notions of global citizenship, service learning, and experiential learning in schools in Hong Kong nowadays. Besides schools and student groups, the governmental and non-governmental organisations

(NGOs), churches, and private companies have initiated and publicised such overseas community projects, thus encouraging a culture of giving and social responsibility. The Agency for Volunteer Service was founded in 1970 to promote and develop volunteerism to build a civil society and caring community. There is also a long history of wealthy families in Hong Kong setting up philanthropic foundations which support poverty alleviation and education (Cheung, 2016). These include the Li Ka Shing Foundation by tycoon Li Ka-shing with a pledge to donate one-third of his assets, or the recent Lui Chee Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation, which launched a HK\$60 million annual award in 2016 (Cheung, 2016). From school to the wider society, volunteering or philanthropy has become part of everyday life in Hong Kong. It has been noted that strategic philanthropic activity is thriving among young people, as they tend to move from the traditional way of sending a cheque to become more proactive and engaged in philanthropy through volunteer tourism (Cheung, 2016).

In the wider Asian region, volunteerism and volunteer tourism have also boomed. It was analysed that many Asian individuals are actively volunteering (Ong, Lockstone-Binney, King, & Smith, 2014). Within the continent, the rates of volunteering were recorded as high in South Korea, the Philippines, Bangladesh, China, and Vietnam; moderate levels in India and Singapore; and relatively low levels in Japan (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011; Musick and Wilson 2008; as cited in Ong et al., 2014). However, there is still a paucity of quantitative statistics on the Asian trend and development of volunteer tourism (Ong et al., 2014).



Figure 2 Posters promoting service trips in HKU

Volunteerism in Taiwan could be traced back to the 1970s when its economy developed rapidly as a way of ‘giving back’ to the international aid and assistance received in the 1960s. The government set up and encouraged the establishment of NGOs to promote public service from the 1970s onwards, including the International Cooperation and Development Fund (TaiwanICDF) which aims at socio-economic development, enhancing human resources, and promoting economic relations in a range of developing partner countries (TaiwanICDF, 2004). Following this, various NGOs have initiated overseas community service projects and service learning has become a compulsory element of the curriculum. The international volunteer tourism phenomenon in Taiwan has aroused public attention and attracted open debate of its values, influences, and impacts (Tu, 2011).

The Japan International Cooperation Agency also established the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers in 1965 following the spirit of Peace Corps in the US (TaiwanICDF, 2004). In Singapore, the rise of volunteer tourism was driven by two developments: the compulsory community involvement programme implemented by the Ministry of Education in Singapore for all pre-tertiary schools in 1997 and the introduction of the Youth Expedition Project in 2000 under an NGO, Singapore International Foundation (Sin, 2009). This has become a key component of formal education and enhanced awareness of the value of community involvement (Sin, 2009, 2010). Korea International Cooperation Agency was created in 1991 to improve relationships with the international community through developmental projects and university volunteering has played a significant role in supporting this governmental effort (Lee & Yen, 2015). Leading more Koreans to participate in volunteer tourism, Korean Overseas Volunteers was started under this Agency in 2003 to send Korean volunteers to partner countries to share expertise, knowledge, and experience in various sectors to make practical contributions to socio-economic development (Sroeu, 2012).

As seen above, the rise of volunteerism and overseas volunteering expeditions in Asia is broadly contemporaneous with that in the West. Yea (2018) has also argued that the Asia-Pacific region has grown as a significant contributor to the rest of the world through international volunteering rather than being simply a recipient of international volunteers and aid. However, volunteer tourism has long been conceived as a Western-based pilgrimage (Pan, 2012), volunteers from Western societies in the Global North sending aid to the developing countries in the Global South (Lo & Lee, 2011). Despite the rapid growth of volunteer tourism in Asian countries, the existing academic literature on volunteer tourism has been very largely premised on Western participants, weighted with Western assumptions and ethical models (Lo & Lee, 2011; Pan, 2017). Voices from the Asian volunteer tourists have largely been ignored, except in limited studies in recent years on volunteers traveling from Hong Kong (Lo & Lee, 2011); Taiwan (Pan, 2012, 2017; Tu, 2011), Singapore

(Chen, 2018; Sin, 2009; Yea, 2018), and South Korea (Lee & Yen, 2015). Most focus on the motivations of and outcomes on the volunteers, except Yea (2018) who looks more deeply into how interpersonal relationships in international volunteering affect development impact through a relational approach, and Chen (2018) who relates the motivations and impacts to wider social and cultural issues in the case of domestic forms of development volunteering for migrant rights within Singapore. This trend of academic research calls for more exploration of the non-Western volunteer tourists (Lo & Lee, 2011; Pan, 2017).

### **1.3 Research objectives**

This thesis is premised on this question: ‘Why do individuals travel as volunteers?’ From this question, I want to conceive volunteer tourism not simply as a form of leisure travel, an alternative to mass tourism. Sin et al. (2015) have discerned that current work on volunteer tourism places too much emphasis on the empirical aspects of this tourism activity, which requires efforts to move further to ‘unpack how volunteer tourism as a social trend is part and parcel of, and contributes to our understanding of, broader social theories’ (p. 121). Given the evolution and growth of volunteer tourism, both in industry and academic research, it is essential to put forward fundamental questions about how and how much we understand the world and our moral and ethical responsibilities in this world through volunteer tourism as a social and political phenomenon (Sin et al., 2015). This leads us to explore the reasons for taking part in volunteer tourism being an appropriate choice. Meanwhile, it is productive to explore what ethical predispositions of the individuals the sending organisations are speaking to. Being an appropriate activity, the assumed qualities from the volunteer tourists embodied through their practice, encounters, and experiences may then reflect issues of their rationalities and the broader social and political issues.

How do we link the personal and the social? Volunteer tourism provides a productive opportunity to address this question by moving beyond a normative framework. Sin et al. (2015) have suggested a ‘post normative’ analytical frame so as to fully comprehend and acknowledge the complexities of the volunteer tourism experience in terms of its practices, outcomes and effects. As Sin et al. (2015) have commented, ‘[n]ormative approaches to volunteer tourism tend to begin with a framework that evaluates such tourism according to a given set of objectives, typically finding that these objectives are either seldom reached or that volunteer tourism “negatively” impacts host communities’ (p. 125). Adopting a ‘post normative’ approach also means moving beyond a framework ‘built around norms and standards of behavior, impact, and effect’ (p. 125), because normative evaluations will result in being overwhelmed by a long list of motivations for taking part in volunteer tourism (Sin et al., 2015). This move will allow a broader approach to conceptualise, understand and evaluate the intersections of such issues as tourism, development, neoliberalism, individualism, and

responsibility. This also prompts us to reconceptualise volunteer tourism by examining the moral self in volunteer tourists and its way of being in the world.

In lieu of centring discussion on the question of generalising volunteer tourists' motivations and associated impacts, or the dichotomy of altruism and self-interest, we should raise broader theoretical and methodological questions through the lens of volunteer tourism with regard to themes such as ethics, care, responsibility, aesthetics, pleasure, development, neoliberalism, to name just a few (Sin et al., 2015). To link the personal and the social while moving away from the question of motivations, drawing out the embeddedness of ethics in practice would then raise broader theoretical questions and implications, if we further take the cultural meanings of the situatedness into account. This also responds to the call for additional theoretical exploration by drawing from different disciplines, such as geography, sociology, anthropology and psychology to further discussions of ethics, community and social capital, transformation, and other untapped areas of research (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). This is productive for the work toward a more holistic theoretical framework for volunteer tourism.

In order to achieve this, volunteer tourism should be approached as a place-based phenomenon. This suggests that we should acknowledge the cultural multiplicities, the thickness of the field, and the phenomenon. As highlighted earlier, previous studies have predominantly focused on volunteer tourists from the affluent Western societies. Despite the prevalence of volunteerism and volunteer tourism among non-Western individuals, particularly Asian, little research has been conducted on these participants. This results in a very specific Western-oriented ethical model and conceptualisation of volunteer tourism. As Sin et al. (2015) have stressed, volunteer tourism should be approached spatially because the contingencies and contexts of locality significantly matter. This spatiality could refer to where the work is done, where the volunteer tourists come from, or where this choice or experience takes the volunteer tourists over time. Hence, by looking at Asian volunteer tourists, it serves to shed some light on practices shaped by a different cultural system. This goes deeper to highlight the embedded ethics in practice and those embodied in practices, by challenging the notion of the 'moral turn' in tourism which requires simply injecting moral philosophy into the understanding and practice of tourism.

To sum up, research objectives of this thesis are as follows:

- 1) to explore why and how volunteer tourism has become an appropriate choice of travel in East Asia by approaching it as a social trend;
- 2) to re-conceptualise volunteer tourism through the moral self to widen theoretical discussions;



- 3) to rethink the interplay of ethics and practices and situatedness of practices to reflect and reveal the cultural specificity of current discussions in volunteer tourism literature so as to contribute to the formation of a more holistic theoretical framework for volunteer tourism.

## 1.4 Structure and synopsis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The introduction has provided an overview of volunteer tourism as a form of alternative tourism. Navigating the growth of this type of tourism as well as academic research on this topic has revealed the major debates in the literature and concerns with current research in this specific field. It has further explored the trend of volunteer tourism in Asia and drawn attention to a need for more exploration in non-Western contexts and outlined the research objectives.

Chapter 2 is a literature review based on the key concepts for the thesis – rationality, community, practice and transformation in relation to the premise of ethics and morality. It starts by situating ethics and morality in the literature as well as in this thesis. It goes on to explore the ‘moral self’ as the subject of practising ethics and morality. I seek to discern the meaning, constitution, and development of the moral self through three aspects: conscious technologies of the self in the formation of the self, unconscious ways of inculcating dispositions, and the *suzhi*/quality discourse. In addition, I theorise the moral self in a collective setting, unpacking possibilities of developing social relationships and their qualities through moral encounters. Through these, I aim at developing an analytical framework to address the identified gaps in the existing literature and the research objectives of this thesis.

In Chapter 3, I outline and discuss my methodological considerations and reflections. I first explain the whole research design from the selection of the research site to the methods adopted. Researching the topic of ethics and morality, I also reflect on practical and situational ethics in this study. This illustrates some of the responsibilities through reflecting on the ethics, positionality, and reciprocity in relation to the research process. I also highlight some challenges and limitations towards the end of the chapter.

Empirical findings are presented in Chapters 4 to 6. Chapter 4 is premised on the question of how volunteer tourism has become an appropriate choice. This is to respond to the first research objective to conceive volunteer tourism as a social and political phenomenon in a broader sense. Here, I look at the complex ethical structures or a framework of predispositions that inform how choices are made by Chinese volunteer tourists rather than a single volunteer tourist’s motivation and decision-making. This then addresses the third research objective by attending to the cultural specificity of the rationalities.

Chapter 5 moves to view the practices of volunteer tourists in the actual volunteering experience. I seek to explore how volunteer tourists seek moral fulfilment through looking at their practices and the kinds of relationships that foster interactions developed in the volunteer tourism space. Three forms of moral communities are identified, in which volunteer participants feel that they belong and seek recognition for moral fulfilment. I then borrow Heidegger's terms – 'being-with', 'being-alongside' and 'being-in' – to understand the modes of being of the volunteers in these moral communities.

Chapter 6 explores the potential of volunteer tourism in transforming participants. As mentioned earlier, the current literature tends to focus on the pitfalls and absolute dichotomy between altruism and self-interest. This chapter attempts to respond to the call to evaluate the transformative potential of volunteer tourism by revealing how transformation is facilitated and the possible forms transformation takes. I argue that volunteer tourism should be moralised differently by conceiving the experience as a trigger for transformation in terms of its temporality and spatiality and, more broadly, the ethical, transformative, and aesthetic dimensions of this form of tourism.

The concluding chapter summarises the research findings of this thesis. Rather than simply reiterating the key findings and discussions of each thematic chapter, I attempt to draw together the key themes running through the thesis so as to offer some thoughts in re-conceptualising volunteer tourism. I go on to highlight some contributions to the continuous formation of a more holistic theoretical framework, as well as practical implications. The chapter ends by identifying potential areas for further research.

## **Chapter 2 Locating the Moral Self**

This chapter aims to outline the debates in the literature surrounding themes on ethics and morality with reference to rationality, community, practices and transformation. It starts with how the discussion of ethics and morality is situated in relevant disciplines and this thesis. Then, it moves on to explore the broad conception of the moral self with regard to the choice of taking part in volunteer tourism. This is approached from the being and making of the good self that unravels the rationality of making this choice and what practices are informed during travelling as a volunteer. It further reviews the being and practice of the moral self in a collective space. By doing so, the chapter aims to develop an analytical framework to address the research gap to be identified before moving to the next chapter.

### **2.1 Situating ethics and morality**

#### **2.1.1 Ethics and morality**

Discussions in Geography surrounding ethics and morality emerged in the 1990s, coined as ‘moral turn’ (Smith, 1997), while an ‘ethical turn’ was also identified in anthropology in the early 2000s (Fassin, 2014) and ‘moral turn’ recently in tourism studies (Caton, 2012). The realm of ethics, or moral philosophy is a particularly interesting and eminently significant philosophical concept which has received increasing attention from geographers attending to the ‘normative issues in general, and ethics in particular’ (Proctor, 1998, p. 8). Differing definitions of ethics and morality can be found in the literature across and within disciplines, and sometimes these two terms are used interchangeably. In lay terms, they are both concerned with the distinction between good and bad or right and wrong. Ethics stems from the Greek word ‘ethos’ which means a habitual mode of conduct, and is concerned with the question of what one should do to be good (Fennell, 2009). Caton (2012) defines morality as the ‘human imaginative and discursive capacity for considering how things should be, as opposed to describing how things are – what is sometimes referred to as the “is” versus “ought” distinction’ (p. 1907). Stafford (2013) defines them by referring to philosopher Bernard Williams, who looks at the different origins of these two terms, that ‘ethics’ (from Greek) relates to individual character and active attempts to do what is or could be right, while ‘morality’ (from Latin) has more to do with questions of custom, social expectation and rule. In light of this, Stafford (2013) posits that ethics is instantiated in agency whereas morality is instantiated in structure. Mostafanezhad and Hannam

(2014) summarise the difference between morality and ethics as that ethics refers to the codes of behaviour for a social group while morality is a broad belief system 'regarding how things ought to be across the range of human experience' (p. 4). For them, ethics speaks more about practices while morality about rules in our daily life.

Rather than seeing 'ethics' and 'morality' as two distinct concepts, Proctor (1998) classifies morality as a subset of ethics or moral philosophy in which 'ethics [...] involves systematic intellectual reflection on morality in general – morality being, as commonly understood, the realm of significant normative concerns, often described by notions such as good or bad, right or wrong, justified or unjustified, and so forth – or specific moral concerns in particular' (p. 9). Lambek (2010a) points out the inconsistency of distinction between ethics and morality in the philosophy and social science literature, such that maintaining the distinction may lead to confusion or limit the discussion to one philosophical domain. 'Ethics' is usually preferred as a term due to its prominence in philosophy, possibly greater association with action than propriety and with 'the good' than 'the right', and ability in 'recognizing the complexity and perhaps inconsistency of human action and intention, a complexity that we think is neglected in much social theory, leading to various kinds of reduction and caricature' (Lambek, 2010a, p. 9). However, Smith (1997) has argued that definitional disputes offer few gains and that 'nothing much is lost if both terms are taken to mean the same: having to do with evaluation of human conduct, with what is right or wrong or good or bad, with what people ought or ought not to do, and with the quality of their actions or characters, in contexts which are not merely matters of etiquette or prudence' (p. 584). Following Smith's assessment, ethics/ethical and morality/moral are therefore used interchangeably in this thesis as I am going to look at both the agency of the individuals and certain practices at particular circumstances and cultural contexts.

Walzer (1994) makes a distinction between a 'thin' and 'thick' morality: a 'thin' morality refers to grand or universal values such as justice and truth; a 'thick' morality is more particular or local, 'richly referential, culturally resonant, locked into a locally established symbolic system or network of meanings' (p. 4). Smith (1997) stresses that this distinction offers an important role for geographers to take up from where philosophers leave off: to recognise the makings of a thin morality inside every thick morality, 'to examine the contextual thickening of moral concepts in the particular (local) circumstances of differentiated human being' (p. 587). The understanding of local culture sensitises us to the geographies of everyday moralities, so that we can conceptualise issues of discussion through the combination of moral assumptions and argument of particular people in particular places (Philo, 1991; as cited in Smith, 1997). This gives rise to terms to signify what kind of people and practices belong to where, such as 'moral landscape' (e.g. Burrai,

Mostafanezhad, & Hannam, 2017; Ploszajska, 1994; Setten, 2004; Setten & Brown, 2009), ‘voluntary landscape’ (e.g. Cloke, Johnsen, & May, 2005; Cloke, Johnsen, & May, 2007), ‘moral location’ (e.g. Ogborn & Philo, 1994), ‘moral order’ (e.g. Driver, 1988; Jackson, 1984), or ‘moral terrain’ (e.g. Proctor, 1995). With the moral turn in geography, common themes in academic work around ethics have been noticed. For example, Proctor (1998) has summarised that research on ethics and geography has been growing in areas including gender, development theory, community identity and exclusion, postmodernism, and justice, universalism and difference. Popke (2006) has taken up streams of work in ethics and responsibility, highlighting the growing trend of research on ethics of care, geographies of ethics with a concern on distance and ethical consumption in everyday practices, and ended the analysis with a call for more direct engagement of ethics and responsibility in social and cultural geographical research. This ‘moral turn’ has brought up three themes that will be especially significant for this thesis – care, responsibility and obligation (Hall, 2011). As volunteer tourism has been conceived as a form of responsible tourism or neoliberal governance, the rhetoric of self-making work through caring for the distant others and enacting global responsibility has successfully asserted responsibility into the choice of travel. With regard to the moral self in making such choice, it invites discussion on how ethics of care, responsibility and obligations are negotiated and intersected, and then embodied through action and practice. The situated questions of such ethics in particular contexts also draw out broader conceptualisation of the way we conceive the contemporary society from how ethics of care, responsibility and obligation are enacted.

### 2.1.2 Ordinary ethics

Ethics, as a basis to distinguish between good and bad, has been perceived to be very philosophical, implicit and exceptional. However, it is believed that some ethical situations and practices are ordinary and routine (Lambek, 2010a; Stafford, 2013). This ordinariness implies some linkage with thick morality which is local and culturally particular. The phrase ‘ordinary ethics’ emerged with growing attention from the recent collection of debates by anthropologists collated by Michael Lambek (2010), and further discussed by Charles Stafford (2013) and colleagues. Singer (2013) argues that

*it is vital that ethics not be treated as something remote... We cannot avoid involvement in ethics, for what we do – and what we don’t do – is always a possible subject of ethical evaluation. Anyone who thinks about what he or she ought to do is consciously or unconsciously, involved in ethics (p. v).*

Lambek (2010a) also notes that ethics is part of the human conditions such that human beings cannot avoid being subject to ethical potentials and demands but also being aware of our failure to do so consistently. According to Lambek (2010a), ethical life is therefore observable not only in exceptional circumstances such

as ‘moral dilemmas’, but also in routine and everyday ones. Ethics is intrinsic to speech and action in everyday circumstances as well as cultural values; particularly speaking, it is not just a component of an action but also an action (Lambek, 2010a, 2010b). ‘Ordinary’, as Lambek (2010a) perceives, implies ethics that is relatively tacit and implicit, occurring with undue attention, grounded in agreement and norms rather than rules and regulations, in practice rather than knowledge or belief. In other words, routine ethical circumstances are often dealt with via tacit understandings and micro processes of everyday life rather than via explicit philosophising, theory building or decision-making. In the book, Lambek and other anthropologists try to show how matters related to law and regulation are drawn into and draw from the ordinary, from there to discuss whether and how ordinary ethical sensibilities are heightened with respect to broad social forces. This is because they reckon that the subject of ethics nowadays is more concerned with law rather than agreement, such as issues on human rights, refuge and citizenship, professional conduct and business ethics. (Lambek, 2010a).

In general, Lambek (2010a) founds his argument on ordinary ethics on Aristotle’s conception of ethics as a dimension of action rather than an aspect of thought. In this view, ‘the ordinary is intrinsically ethical and ethics intrinsically ordinary’ (Lambek, 2010a, p. 3). In addition, Lambek (2010a) broadly follows Bourdieu’s ideas in accentuating how ethical judgements depend on tacit understandings of how things are and happen as unconscious responses rather than explicit, conscious reasoning and reflections. Responding to this approach, Stafford (2013) emphasises and posits that ethics is also the subject of explicit and conscious deliberation which is a routine dimension of action, and thus ‘explicit ethical reflection, explicit discussion of ethical matters and explicit judgement and decision-making in relation to ethical demands are also “ordinary” aspects of human life’ (p. 5). In this thesis, ordinary ethics provides the foundation of analysis – looking at the ordinary, implicit or explicit dimension of action and aspect of thought, rather than moral dilemmas or philosophising processes.

There is an expanding literature discussing ordinary ethics in relation to ethical consumption in geography. It has been argued that consumption provides a platform for expressing personal ethical beliefs and exercising ethical motivations (Hall, 2011; Wilk, 2001). Hall (2011) refers ‘ethical everyday’ to be everyday ethical practice in which ethics used to inform our conduct may be expressed in everyday practices. Hall (2011) has explored how ethical negotiations occur within everyday family consumption to recognise ethical nature of everyday practices and choices of consumption and then argued that there are various ways of recognising consumption as an ethically-embedded process rather consumers subscribing to a given set of ethics in consumption. Cloke et al. (2007) see ordinary ethics as ‘complex everyday caring and relations with others which are widespread through society (p. 1099). Such circumstance is embedded in routines and deeply

ingrained habits (Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, & Malpass, 2005; Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, & Malpass, 2010b). Daya (2016) has looked into how people's ethical beliefs and recognition of a shared identity and others are embodied through buying handmade crafts in Cape Town, and revealed that ethical relationships between consumers and producers are central to the business of trade in informal and market spaces in the sense that ordinary ethics of care for others go beyond explicit, rational responsibility to cultivate oneself. There is a tendency to assume that the ethical intention will necessarily and directly lead to actual behaviour (Fukukawa, 2003, as cited in Deng, 2015). This oversimplification has been criticised, as evidence showed that some people only support ethical consumption at the emotional level, partly because of the extra cost for adopting ethical practices (Deng, 2015). Given the disposition of ordinary ethics, the question moves forward to how such disposition is 'worked up' in consumption (Barnett et al., 2005; Popke, 2006), how motivations are translated into actual practices and how these practices are then morally made sense of from the embedding of ethics in practices. This also brings up the question of how a choice becomes appropriate or ethical, which will be discussed in the next section.

As ethics is intrinsic to everyday circumstances in different cultures, cultural specificity has to be taken into account. Such practice may arise from cultural norms that an individual encounters and negotiates in daily life and ethics operationalised by the individuals differently (Subrahmanyam, Stinerock, & Banbury, 2015), or embedded in a cultural context of global consumer capitalism (Varul, 2009). However, the complex and culturally-specific ethical decision-making and behaviour in consumption has been neglected in this body of literature (McEwan, Hughes, & Bek, 2015). Most of the studies on ethical consumption have been done in affluent Euro-American economies (Subrahmanyam et al., 2015). This may be due to the tenacious assumption in ethical consumption debates that most (ethical) consumers are from the global North (Hall, 2011; McEwan et al., 2015). Recent studies (e.g. Daya, 2016; Deng, 2015; Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Hughes, McEwan, & Bek, 2015; McEwan et al., 2015) on everyday ethical consumption practices in the global South have shown signs of globalising the discussion beyond the North, posing the question: 'What happens when the consumers may be neither so distant [from southern producers], nor so affluent?' (Crang & Hughes, 2015, p. 131), leading us to think about the thick morality in non-Western contexts. Putting this issue in a tourism context, ordinary ethics provides a useful lens in unpacking practices, encounters and experiences. However, it has not yet been explicitly deployed to this area of research. One line of this inquiry signposts more investigation into how encounters in tourism space elicit emotional responses such as guilt, shame, sympathy and concern, which is worth attention (Gibson, 2009). This provides a direction in looking into the aspect of thought and emotional dimension of action. This guides us further to see how people from a particular culture situate those responses in different contexts framed by ordinary ethics.

## 2.2 The moral self

After situating the ethics and morality, it comes to understand the subject of practising ethics or morality. As to explore the routine ethical dimension of actions and aspect of thought of an individual, it is important to discern the meaning, constitution and development of the ‘moral self’. In order to unpack what shapes the frames of reference, it requires to develop a framework that helps understanding of both unconscious dispositions and active technologies. In the following, I am going to examine the moral self through three concepts: 1) conscious technologies of the self and moral selving, 2) unconscious ways of inculcation of dispositions, and 3) accumulation of *suzhi* (innate and nurtured qualities of human bodies and their conduct; will be defined and discussed in Section 2.2.4).

### 2.2.1 Forming of the self

#### 2.2.1.1 *Ethics and subjectivation*

Foucault’s later work on ethics, subjectivation and technologies of the self has provided a useful lens in unpacking the quality of this moral self. This stage of his work shifted from the relationship of the subject and games of truth to subjectivation, or from viewing the subject as an effect of power to self-creation (Ansell-Pearson, 1991; Feighery, 2011). Subjectivation, the relation of the self to the self, is the key concept in Foucauldian ethics, bringing up discussions on how human beings constitute themselves as a subject and relate ethically to themselves and others. Foucault distinguishes morality and ethics in the way that he sees morality in three aspects: 1) a ‘moral code’, a complex interplay of elements; 2) real behaviour of individuals subject to this ‘code’; and 3) to ‘conduct oneself’, the manner in which one constitutes oneself as ethical subject of the code (Foucault, 1985, p. 25-26). The term *ethics* is only used in relation to the third aspect on subjectivation. Given a code of action, there are different ways of conducting oneself morally, ‘not just as an agent, but as an ethical subject of this action’ (Foucault, 1985, p. 26). He suggests four dimensions of the relation of the self to the ethical self: 1) determination of the ethical substance, the way the individual attends to a specific part of the self to constitute the core of the moral conduct; 2) mode of subjection, the way the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognises his moral obligations; 3) forms of elaboration of ethical work, work performed by the individual to elaborate self and attempt to transform himself into ethical subject of his action; 4) telos of the ethical subject, trajectory of and work towards becoming self (Foucault, 1985). For Foucault, the rules and consequences associated with the normative moral action are not the primary concern; the locus of ethics is on the characters of the individual (Levy, 2004; as cited in Feighery, 2011), thus a moral action aims at establishing a moral conduct that commits the individual to a certain way of being, being characteristic of an ethical subject (Foucault, 1985). For an action to be moral, it should not



be reduced to only conforming to rules and laws; it should involve a relationship with the self, a self-formation of ethical subject to get prepared for 'a certain complete achievement of life' (Foucault, 1988, p. 31). The moral goal of forming part of the self as the object of his own moral practice and deciding on the mode of being requires the individual to act upon himself, to improve and transform himself. According to Foucault (1985), there is 'no moral conduct that does not call for the forming of oneself as an ethical subject; and no forming of the ethical subject without "modes of subjectivation" and an "ascetics" or "practices of the self" that support them' (p. 28). Therefore, understanding ways in which the individual is urged to constitute himself as an ethical subject requires the study of the forms of moral subjectivation and the practices of the self for the transformation (Foucault, 1985).

### *2.2.1.2 Care for the self*

This self-forming work and practices of the self emphasises the forms of relations with the self as well as methods and techniques to enable the transformation into a certain mode of being. This form of relations with the self, 'care for the self' in Foucault's term, results in dispositions of ethics (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Müller, & Gauthier, 1987). As Foucault questions, although care for the self has permeated all ethical thought, care for the self has become unethical, 'as being a kind of selflove, a kind of egoism or individual interest in contradiction to the care one must show others or to the necessary sacrifice of the self' (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 115-116), 'as a means of escape from all possible rules' (Foucault, 1988, p. 22). Foucault made attempts to discuss the subject not only in theory but in relation to a set of practices in late antiquity. Through this, he has found that care for the self is ethical in itself and also implies complex relations with others (relations with others will be discussed in detail in Section 2.3). The practices of the self to become an ethical subject are not simply investments on the self for future return; they are also practices through which the individual is conscious of this status as forming the self in relation to rules of conduct in place (Dilts, 2011). These practices of examining and monitoring oneself with concerns on what one is, what one does and what one is capable of doing which are key to the formation of the ethical subject. Foucault sees this care for the self as a conversion of power, or a way of limiting and controlling (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987). In his idea of governmentality, he explores the relationship of the self to self through practices by which 'one can constitute, define, organize, instrumentalize the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other' (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987, p. 130).

For Foucault, care for the self refers to living an ethical life, operating at the level of everyday life practices. Different forms of care produce different forms of the self. Thus, Foucault suggests us to find our own applications and in this endeavour actively shape our ethos through an aesthetics of self-development in order

to become ethical subjects of our conduct (Feighery, 2011; Foucault, 1985). A new concern with the self may involve a new experience of the self; Foucault's concept of subjectivation and care for the self helps us understand the kind of self-fashioning ethics of care and the technologies to transform the self in the contemporary society.

### *2.2.1.3 Technologies of the self*

Foucault refers such self-forming work as technologies of the self, one of the four cultural technologies (along with technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, and technologies of power) by which we develop knowledge of ourselves. Technologies of the self refer to means to govern 'the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends' (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). They 'permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). Since the 'subject' in Foucault's concept is not a substance but a form which is not primarily and constantly identical to itself (Feighery, 2011), *rapport a soi* (relation with the self) implies many possibilities within which relationships with oneself are constituted (Cordner, 2008). Following this, technologies of the self focus on the 'hermeneutics of the self, rather than the more practical business of the actual training of individuals in particular social activities' (Burkitt, 2002, p. 221). These modes of training and modification are not just about acquiring certain sets of skills but also certain attitudes, resulting in an individual with the dispositions and capacities to act morally (Burkitt, 2002; Foucault, 1988). Technologies could be understood as practical rationality that informs and accompanies practical action which aims to instil habitus, skills and capacities and, later, to provide the reflexive powers to reason about their virtues in the self-formation process (Burkitt, 2002). Such practical rationality guides us to take appropriate action in complex social contexts, in which 'appropriate' embodies a notion of balanced judgement based on ethical concerns (Sanderson, 2006). These techniques are also traditional in the sense that they are cultural and passed down through social groups, or enmeshed in social relations (Burkitt, 2002). As argued by Giddens (1990), however, social activities and relations nowadays are freed from traditions and local practices; thus, reflexivity plays an increasingly more important role as the basis for understanding and acting (as cited in Sanderson, 2006). As a result, technologies of the self, as one of the four technologies, are means through which the individuals produce not only things, but also themselves as ethical selves in both reflexive and non-reflexive ways (Burkitt, 2002).

#### *2.2.1.4 Responsibilising the moral self*

The means to govern the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends navigate us to the discussion about geography of responsibility in relation to neoliberalism and the neoliberal discourses of responsibilisation. Neoliberalism, as summarised as a general consensus across scholarship, refers to ‘a set of ideals and practices that involve a shrinking state mandate, deregulation and privatisation, a faith in markets to govern social life, and an increased emphasis on personal choice and freedom’ (Trnka & Trundle, 2014, p. 137). Here, personal choice and autonomy are highlighted as ways of enacting responsibility, which is one of the main themes of neoliberalism. Kipnis (2007) has outlined and compared two ways of theorising neoliberalism, one based on the ‘Marxian ideological critique of Jean and John Comaroff’ and the other on ‘Foucault’s lectures on the topic of governmentality and their interpretations’ (p. 384-385). The former one is more of a Marxian approach of suggesting a culture of neoliberalism without many details on the techniques and processes of governance itself (Kipnis, 2007). In this approach, ‘society’ does not exist, leaving individuals competing in the free markets to construct the reasonable ideal, ‘the only ground for freedom’ (Kipnis, 2007, p. 385).

The second approach, using Foucault’s idea on governmentality, focuses on the initiatives and techniques in producing responsible and governable subjects. Governmentality refers to the contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self (Foucault, 1988). This approach, or ‘governmentality theory’, focuses on the mix of a diversity of knowledges, agents, and technologies or strategies in working up the individuals into the subjects as the surface of government (Barnett et al., 2010b). Individuals are positioned by the governmental rationalities that they need to work on themselves and their conduct in order to transform themselves (Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, & Malpass, 2010a). This is linked to the idea of ‘technologies of the self’ governing ‘the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends’ (Foucault, 1988, p. 18). The governmentality theorists posit that the techniques and discourses are simultaneously existed in the governance of the world in other aspects rather than just neoliberalism. Thus, this approach is more encompassing attempts to the production of neoliberal citizens through intervention and retreat from intervention of the state (Kipnis, 2007). These attempts are to reconfigure the practices of the government by considering the subjects as responsible, rational, autonomous and empowered with choices (Kelly, 2001). Nevertheless, Kipnis (2007) points out that these subjects are more alienated although responsible and autonomous.

Under neoliberalism, agenda, burden or efforts of resolving social problems, which were primarily state’s business, have been shifted to the individuals, resulting in them taking up the responsibility. Being

responsibilised, responsibility presumes individuals' care for his own duties and un-coerced application of certain values as a root motivation for action (Selznick, 2002; as cited in Barnett et al., 2010b). As a technique of governance, these processes of responsibilisation imply that the individuals must be actively responsible for carrying out these activities and their outcomes (Burchell, 1993; Kelly, 2001). These processes, as institutionally dependent processes of individualisation and standardisation (Beck, 1992), also encourage the individuals to be self-enterprising to 'conduct themselves in accordance with the appropriate (or approved) model of action' (Burchell, 1993, p. 276). Shamir (2008) also sees responsibilisation as a call for a response or action in particular, 'an interpellation which constructs and assumes a moral agency and certain dispositions to social action that necessarily follow' (p. 4). Living in an age of responsibilisation, Shamir (2008) further rationalises responsibilisation as a technique of governance, 'fundamentally premised on the construction of moral agency as the necessary ontological condition for ensuring an entrepreneurial disposition in the case of individuals and socio-moral authority in the case of institutions. Neoliberal responsibilisation is unique in that it assumes a moral agency which is congruent with the attributed tendencies of economic-rational actors: autonomous, self-determined and self-sustaining subjects' (p. 7). As responsibilisation has reconfigured roles and identities of individual actors, these subjects have to be 'made up' through mobilisation of techniques to actively undertake and perform self-governing tasks (Beck, 1992; Kelly, 2001). Given that, the governmental rationalities do not determine forms of subjectivities; they 'elicit, promote, facilitate, foster, and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents' (Dean, 1999, p. 32; as cited in Barnett et al., 2010b, p. 44). As Burchell (1993) argues, these neoliberal practices of government 'offer' the individuals the new opportunities to actively participate in actions to 'resolve the kind of issues hitherto held to be the responsibility of authorized governmental agencies' (p. 276). Therefore, such rhetoric has led to 'deepening of personal responsibility' (Patrick, 2012; as cited in Garthwaite, 2017) and an active/passive binary in which the subjects are in need of empowerment while being actively responsibilised (Garthwaite, 2017). As a result, these individuals or agents experience themselves through those capacities, qualities and statuses, and then conduct themselves (Dean, 2010). Alongside the transformation of a subject with entitlement rights into a responsibilised subject (Barnett et al., 2010b), effective governance means governing through dispositions and practices of individuals rather than society (Rose, 1996). In other words, assumed responsibility is the practical master-key to this certain end.

Particularly, Barnett et al. (2010b) have recently produced an extensive work to explore how individuals are worked up as neoliberal subjects in ethical consumption practices. As they have analysed, in order to mobilise the subjects, firstly it is essential to make the individuals capable of acting as the choosing subjects by creating devices and mechanism for the governance of conduct. Following this, mobilising the responsible subjects

involves on the one hand practical and narrative resources being made available to people to enable them to act responsibly in relation to the broader social and environmental responsibilities, and on the other hand organisations making a collective of responsible subjects knowable (Barnett et al., 2010a). These strategies or technologies aim at promoting and producing active citizenship. Active citizenship serves to attenuate responsibilities rather than rights, obligations rather than entitlements (Kearns, 1995; as cited in Garthwaite, 2017). While shifting responsibility of resolving social and environmental problems to individual citizens so as to neoliberalise, for example, welfare provision, consumption and development, accounts of active citizenship emphasises the importance of volunteerism in order to reduce dependence on state social service and welfare provision. Volunteering thus has appeared as one of the popular forms of responsabilisation.

The rise of volunteerism has marked the shifting landscape of responsibility which was articulated as top-down and unproblematised (Noxolo et al., 2012). It reflects the changing state ideologies about the apparatus of welfare and roles and accountability in social service provision (Cloke et al., 2007). Within contemporary landscape of volunteering in the West, a major swing from collective to individualised volunteering has been noticed (Beck, 2002; Eckstein, 2001; Meijs and Hoogstad, 2001; as cited in Cloke et al., 2007). Collective volunteering is usually initiated and supervised by groups relying on ethics of religious traditions and altruism, whilst individualised volunteering has a mixture of 'compassion and duty with more personalised objectives such as dealing with personal experiences of biographical discontinuity and opening out possibilities for self-realisation' (Cloke et al., 2007, p. 1092). It is believed that this would imply a shift from selflessness to self-interest with the purpose of assuming responsibility working up the self and self-formation (Cloke et al., 2007). However, it is pointed out that sometimes it is hard to disentangle 'motives between an ethically driven desire to be responsible, and more selfishly orientated desires to feel and to be perceived by others to be socially responsible' (Brinkmann and Peattie, 2008, p. 29; as cited in Varul, 2009). Therefore, Barnett and Land (2007) have proposed to conceive altruism and egoism as co-existence of two perspectives to make up ethical subjectivity: 'a subjective, partial, personal perspective, in which a person acts as an "I"; and an impersonal perspective, in which actors strive to adopt an objective position on states of affairs' (p. 1071). Volunteering is perceived to be bridging the practice of these ordinary ethics into extraordinary situations as a performance of ethical citizenship rather than dutiful citizenship (Cloke et al., 2007). Under this form of ethical citizenship, people volunteer due to a sense of 'wanted to' rather than 'obliged to' and use volunteering to develop a more virtuous identity (Cloke et al., 2007). Volunteering thus plays as a device to bridge between 'the governing of the ethical self and the broader governing of welfare' (Cloke et al., 2007, p. 1092).

### *2.2.1.5 Moral selving – Cynicism and hope*

The process of self-formation to become an ethical subject can also be conceptualised through the idea of moral selving. As mentioned earlier, volunteering involves both improving oneself as well as helping others, and some researchers have posited that it is hard to distinguish clearly between altruism and self-interest and thus it is reasonable to possess both (Tomazos & Butler, 2010; Varul, 2009). In exploring committed volunteers' pursuit of self-betterment, Allahyari (2000) introduces 'moral selving' to refer to the 'work of creating oneself as a more virtuous, and often more spiritual, person [...] one type of deeply emotional self work' (p. 4). Moral selving is the process of shaping, striving, creating, building, and sculpting the moral self – 'the cognitive, and emotive, self-related elements of the social self' in the form of a disposition of moral responsibility (Allahyari, 2000, p. 4). Despite this, it is malleable when individuals experience new methods or new resources for fashioning a more virtuous self. Allahyari's (2000) idea of moral selving emerged from work looking at the linkages among volunteerism, caring for the poor and moral personhood from volunteers' perspectives, with fieldwork in two American social service agencies – Loaves & Fishes with mostly white, middle-class volunteers and The Salvation Army predominately with male and non-white, working-class and lower-middle-class volunteers. She captured how volunteers responded to situationally available moral rhetoric towards the moral construction of the self in two settings with racial, class and gender diversity. In other words, her work focuses on various meaning of constructing a virtuous self and how the self-fashioning work is affected by the setting.

The idea of moral selving has also been employed to understand the growth of ethical consumption. Putting it in the context of ethical consumption, it is understood as the mediated work of crafting a moral self through practices that acknowledges responsibilities to others, either explicit display or implicit, humble mode of conduct (Barnett et al., 2005). Using a case study of Traidcraft, which brands itself as the leading fair trade organisation in the UK, Barnett et al. (2005) argue that the ordinarily ethical everyday consumption routines are performances and mediated practices of constructing a life through negotiating consumer choices about personal conduct, and such ethical expression and exercise involves governing the consumption and the consuming self. These everyday practical dispositions are re-articulated with campaigns and politics that register individual responsibility into broader forms of collective accountability (Barnett et al., 2005). Varul (2009) elaborates on the notion of ethical selving in fair trade consumption in the UK and Germany by arguing that cultural contexts should be taken into consideration so as to understand how different people think about the extent of their responsibility and how they construct themselves as ethical selves. Although mentioning the term 'moral selving' adopted by Barnett et al. (2005), Varul (2009) rather uses ethical selving to

'acknowledge [...] the feeling of ethical obligation integrated in people's images of themselves and that ethical consumers often do not see morality and selfhood as competing or conflicting, but as integrated' (p. 183). Instead of looking at the underlying moral self of Allahyari's (2000) moral selving, ethical selving here resonates with Foucault's discussions on ethics, subjectivation and ethical self, and focuses on self-identities which implies a possibility of moral judgement by others at the same time a yardstick of judging others (Varul, 2009). Boluk (2011) investigates the notion of moral selving in the context of ethical travel using the case study of Western tourists going on holiday certified with Fair Trade Tourism South Africa which involves black communities in the ownership and operation of tourism businesses. Fair Trade Tourism, a kind of pro-poor tourism or ethical consumption, can be conceived of conspicuous consumption as the consumption in itself is hedonistic, especially when the tourists use it as a means to demonstrate their ethical self (Boluk, 2011). The participation in Fair Trade Tourism allows the tourists to appear as if they were more consistent in their motivations and demonstrated self-image because their ethical concerns seem to have influenced their travel behaviour, although the languages they used sometimes contrasted their demonstrated virtuous tendencies and aspirations (Boluk, 2011). Hence, the consumption of these ethical tourism products or similar ethical activities represents the power of the consumers to create and choose the self, and to assist themselves in self-fashioning as ethical, concerned, educated and good human beings (Boluk, 2011; Slater, 1997).

Similar self-fashioning work communicated through volunteer tourism has been more seen in a cynical term. As reviewed in the previous chapter, participation in volunteer tourism has received criticism over the debate between altruism and self-interest, having more positive impacts on the volunteers rather than the host community, or failure to live up to its promise as a vehicle for making positive social and environmental changes to the wider society (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). McGehee (2014) has also noticed the critique of volunteer tourism as 'a potential purveyor of western neoliberalism and neo-colonial notions of "us versus them"' (p. 850). Sin (2009) found that 'many volunteer tourists are typically more interested in fulfilling objectives relating to the "self"' (p. 497). Butcher and Smith (2010) have also explored the notion of the 'self' in volunteer tourism, finding that 'the "desire to make a difference"...[has become] connected to lifestyle... [and] closely linked to a narrative of personal growth' (p. 33). These findings and discussions then critique altruism as the claimed foundational motivations and purpose of volunteer tourism, as re-emerged more systematically and explicitly as a niche subject of research and debate (Wearing, 2001). As a response, Ateljevic (2009) argues that the academic literature has demonstrated a more aggressive trend of criticising rather than critiquing volunteer tourism. She claims that the various issues and problems facing human beings have been leading people to shift from the current unsustainable, materialist paradigm to the transmodernity paradigm to 'search for a new worldview of higher values and more responsible, meaningful lives' (Ateljevic

& Tomljenovic, 2016, p. 26). This produces a 'hopeful tourism' scholarship which is a 'values-based, unfolding transformative perspective' (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 942) to offer active hope which helps to visualise ideas and formulate corresponding plans to accomplish its ends. Ateljevic and Tomljenovic (2016) propose, in order to be transformational, 'tourism must stimulate change by provoking a deep questioning of the purpose and meaning of people's life through empathic, engaged, authentic and invited, rather than imposed, encounters with the lives of others' (p. 30). In light of this, a growing need for transformative and conscious travel to find the means to change one's life(style) and impacts on the destinations has been seen (Ateljevic & Tomljenovic, 2016).

Correspondingly, rather than cynically criticising volunteer tourism for focusing on personal development of volunteers and not bringing sustainable impacts, we have started to see views on transformative potential of volunteer tourism which may offer a new way of thinking, a new vision to move us beyond postmodern deconstructions of modernity 'from the edge of chaos into a new order of society' (Sardar, 2004, p. 2; as cited in Ateljevic, 2009). This gives rise to the idea of transformation of the self by better understanding the self and becoming more conscious through travelling experience.

The connection between transformation or transformative learning and volunteer tourism has been found in various studies. In Broad's (2003) study on volunteering in the Gibbon Rehabilitation Project in Thailand, volunteer tourists reported that they have experienced changes in views on their lives and the world as well as developed better understanding of the self through engaging in local village life and undertaking tourist activities. Lepp (2008) examined how volunteers have been influenced by the voluntary work in Kenya and found that volunteers 'developed a new perspective on life at home and discovered an intrinsic need for meanings and purposes of their lives' (p. 98). The findings of a study on volunteer tourists from Hong Kong also indicated changed views of life, personal development and growth, and influence on life directions as perceived values of volunteer tourism (Lo & Lee, 2011). Pan (2017) also found that Taiwanese volunteer tourists have reported similar changes in view which resulted in learning to appreciate a slower life pace and self-relaxation at the same time changing choice of travel destination. Nonetheless, previous studies tend to list out reported outcomes without much looking into the transformative process or underpinning that contributes to the making and (new) experience of the moral self.

Some studies have attempted to delve into the transformative potential through more conceptual understanding of the changes in worldview or self-identity. The theoretical approaches offer a particular lens to unravel how volunteer tourism experience has led to further participation and/or (re)working of the



volunteer tourists. McGehee and Santos (2005) examined how the experience of volunteer tourists informed their involvement in social movements, by drawing on theoretical perspectives of social psychology and resource mobilisation. The findings indicated that participation in volunteer tourism has positive impacts on intended post-trip social movement activities and support for social activism from the establishment and expansion of social networks and raised consciousness (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Although not taking part in the same programme, volunteer tourists of their study continued participation in movements of similar cause or adopted different ethical practices. Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) explored the importance of existential authenticity in motivations of and activities undertaken by volunteer tourists travelling to Thailand, and found that a volunteer tourism experience is driven by a desire for existential authenticity which facilitates the self-making in the liminal space of volunteering. McIntosh and Zahra (2007) explored how changes in volunteer tourists' self-identity and values influence their lifestyle through the lens of cathartic experience in the process of volunteering. Building on this study, Zahra (2010) found through a longitudinal study how volunteer tourists experienced a change in life course. When the encounter of poverty and suffering intersected with the cheerfulness of the local communities amid lack of resources, volunteers were found to experience a cathartic and life-changing experience which showed impacts on their everyday life even eight years after participation. Zahra (2010) has concluded that volunteer tourism has the potential of transforming and reworking the self which corresponds to the claim of Wearing (2001) that volunteer tourism causes 'value change and changed consciousness in the individual that will subsequently influence their lifestyle' (p. x.).

Transformative learning is another theoretical approach with growing attention and interest. A review of the volunteer tourism literature was conducted by Coghlan and Gooch (2011) to identify and explore how Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory has been applied to reconceptualise practices of volunteer tourism (this theory will be elaborated and discussed in detail in Chapter 6). Transformative learning theory is considered to be a useful framework for viewing volunteer tourists' experience, meanwhile efforts to help participants 'developing a plan of action' and 'trying out new roles and gaining feedback' by the sending organisations are required to complete the transformative process (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). By doing so, it is more likely to move volunteer tourism beyond the rhetoric 'doing something worthwhile' or 'making a difference' to life-changing in the long run that will benefit both volunteers and the volunteered (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Adopting quantitative methods, Knollenberg, McGehee, Boley, and Clemmons (2014) examined the transformative expectations of potential volunteer tourists by using Taylor's (2007) three elements of transformative learning – self-reflection, engaging in dialogue, and intercultural experience – which were developed further from Mezirow's transformative learning theory. They found that voluntourists had the greatest expectations among the three categories (volunteers, voluntourists and tourists), but not all

potential participants expected or even wanted a transformational experience (Knollenberg et al., 2014). Hammersley (2014) has extended the conversation by arguing the importance of structural opportunities for both pre-trip preparation and post-trip debriefing of volunteers in facilitating transformation to develop which are proposed by Taylor (2008), during which expedition leaders would play a key role in providing support through the process of disorienting dilemma or effecting changes in the frames of reference. However, only a few studies have pinpointed the importance to guide volunteer tourists to seek greater understanding and knowledge prior to the trip and the need to incorporate critical reflection of their experiences upon return (e.g. Grusky, 2000; Raymond, 2008; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Simpson, 2004, 2005). Literature with a focus on post-trip reflection or learning is still scant (Henry, 2019; see also Coghlan & Weiler, 2018; Couch & Georgeou, 2017; Ong, King, Lockstone-Binney, & Juneke, 2018). Albeit the evidence of applying transformative learning theory in reviewing volunteer tourism experience, more research on the transformative learning process and its potential positive impacts is required to examine how the process can be prolonged to develop the moral self through moments such as better understanding the self and perceived values of personal development which have been discussed extensively in the current literature.

This required attention to the post-trip learning experience also offers some methodological insights. Other than considering the transition from volunteer to academic or activist, participating as an informant is one of the pedagogical methods in prompting critical reflection. Liang, Caton, and Hill (2015) have shown that ‘participating in an interview was in itself viewed as a noteworthy catalyst in helping study participants reflect on their learning [which] demonstrates the value that can ensue simply by having a relative stranger ask the right questions’ (p. 236). Volunteers’ critical reflection after returning home was facilitated by an email-based interview conducted by Hammersley (2014). These are some of the examples of how researchers could help push towards a critical pedagogy, but more should be done by action researchers using our role in the field or lines of questioning in interviews or focus group to help steer volunteers to develop their geographical and sociological imaginations (Henry, 2019).

### 2.2.2 The moral self: Unconscious inculcation of dispositions

The previous section mainly focuses on the constitution and development of the moral self. It explores how individuals are responsibilised as a particular type of agents for state’s agenda through active technologies of the self and thus explains why volunteering and volunteer tourism have appeared as an ethical action to fulfil this active citizenship. It is equally important to look at the process of instilling dispositions as character of the individuals that inform their practices and actions. By doing so, it allows us to understand how ethical action is elicited and fostered at the same time volunteering/volunteer tourism occurs to them as an appropriate

choice. Cottingham (2000) suggests that if we possess the character and personality to lead an ethical life, we may not be able to choose when to activate these traits in our character, and thus continuous cultivation of our ethical and emotional sensibilities is important in building up the virtue ethics to achieve an ethical life. When active strategies are available, these ethical traits are activated and individuals respond in the intended form of the strategies.

In order to understand how a choice is made for an ethical action, habitus provides a perspective to explore the logic of practice through dispositions inculcated in the individuals' life trajectories. The concept of habitus can be dated back to Aristotle's philosophical discussions about the human activity and the self. More recently, habitus occupies a central place in Bourdieu's theory of practice and has been applied widely in social sciences especially sociology and education but largely absent from the study of volunteering (Dean, 2016). Bourdieu (1990b) defines habitus as:

*the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (p. 53)*

In other words, it can be conceived as a scheme of perceptions and thoughts of action, through the process of socialisation, embodied as dispositions which provide an objective basis for the regularity of mode of behaviour and thus that of the mode of practice, with the result that individuals with the habitus act in a certain way in certain circumstances, in the way that the underlying structures are reproduced. It reflects an individual history, 'a present past' that tends 'to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms' and 'to perpetuate itself into the future by reactivation in similarly structured practices' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54). The structural code of culture is internalised as habitus and informs the production of social practice; thus, habitus is an internalised structure and a physical embodiment of objective structure (Nash, 1999).

Habitus can also be conceived as what forms the basis of character of an individual, 'our own self' (Burkitt, 2002, p. 226). Aristotle regards habitus as central to constituting humans into selves, and these dispositions are instilled from earlier years of education to produce a socialised, structured body (Burkitt, 2002; Reay, 2004). According to Bourdieu, habitus does not only constitute the self in the social world, but it also reflects how the immanent structures of the social world are incorporated in the body in certain ways that 'structures the perception of that world as well as action in that world' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 81; as cited in Reay, 2004, p.

432). Habitus is a multi-layered concept reflecting the complex social structures and social practices at both individual and society levels; thus, it is constituted by both the individual history as well as the collective history of social institutions to which individuals belong. Hence, habitus differs within and between societies based on the social trajectories of the individual (Reay, 2004).

Choice is believed to be central to habitus (Reay, 2004). For Aristotle, moral virtue or lack of it is a habitual disposition as the basis on which an individual chooses the ways of acting appropriate to the situation (Burkitt, 2002). However, the choices registered or inscribed in the habitus are limited by social structures, knowledge and experiences. Similar to an 'art of inventing', habitus enables the production of an infinite number of practices that are unpredictable but reasonable falling within the limits of the regularities of a particular class or social group (Bourdieu, 1990b). It is unpredictable because habitus is internalised as a second nature and embodied as active presence of past experiences; it is also 'a spontaneity without consciousness or will' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 56), characterised by the logic 'of vagueness, of the more-or-less, which defines one's ordinary relation to the world' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 78). Therefore, individuals would not be able to pinpoint the moment in their history when they were told to act in a certain way; it is something built upon over time, 'something in the blood, in the very fibre of a man or woman' which is not necessarily found at the level of consciousness (Dean, 2016; Reay, 2005, p. 911). Although Bourdieu's habitus and its applications in other studies (e.g. Colley, James, Diment, & Tedder, 2003; Dean, 2016; Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010) highlight the difference between social groups or class, it still offers a useful lens in this thesis (which was not set to explore the difference) to conceive the generative nature of habitus as a mediating construct to combine one's previous knowledge and experiences to produce particular responses to certain situations. It denotes an acquired ability rather than a habit, which enables the individuals to act in ways that are not wholly predetermined (Burkitt, 2002).

Habitus is seen as Bourdieu's response to the structure-agency debate, as a method of explaining social practice and the structure in which such practices occur (Calhoun, 2011; as cited in Dean, 2016). Besides producing practice, habitus also enables an individual to reproduce structures, generating a wider repertoire of possibility of actions and practices. It bears transformative potential that 'leads us to "reproduce" the social conditions of our own production, but in a relatively unpredictable way, in which a way that one cannot move simply and mechanically from knowledge of the conditions of production to knowledge of the products' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 87; as cited in Reay, 2004, p. 433). So, habitus is responsive and permeable in the sense that circumstances are not existing only to be acted upon but also to be internalised to add another layer to the habitus acquired through earlier socialisation. Implicit in the concept is that habitus operates at unconscious

level until the individual encounters self-questioning moments whereupon habitus operates at the conscious level in a way that new facets of the self are developed (Reay, 2004). However, Sayer (2005) argues that Bourdieu overplays the unconsciousness of habitus, neglecting mundane everyday reflexivity. According to Sayer (2005), Bourdieu's emphasis on unconsciousness and pre-reflexivity does not allow any ethical dimension of the habitus. Similarly, Farnell (2000) asserts that in Bourdieu's formulation of habitus, individuals' adjustments to the external world are all apparently unconscious, or less than conscious, and it is less prone to change flexibly.

As Bourdieu (1996) states, family is the primary space of accumulation and transmission of different forms of capital, including habitus (as cited in Nash, 1999). The habitus acquired in the family forms the basis of structuring experiences in other social institutions such as school; through socialisation in school, the habitus transformed by actions in the school in turn is reflected in subsequent experiences, 'from restructuring to restructuring' (Bourdieu, 1972; as cited in Reay, 2004, p.434). As a result of socialisation in a different space, such as from family to school, 'members of a social group come to acquire a set of dispositions which reflect the central structural elements (political instability, kinship rules, and so on) of their society, and therefore behave in ways which necessarily reproduce those structural elements, although in a modified form' (Nash, 1999, p. 185). This invites more discussion or exploration on how patterns of thought emerge challenging existing modes of thought or how individuals mediate the habitus which they have acquired.

As discussed earlier, technologies of the self are modes of training and modification which are not just about acquiring certain sets of skills but also certain attitudes, resulting in an individual with the dispositions and capacities to act morally to achieve the ultimate goal of self-making. These training and modification, or inculcation of moral dispositions, are dependent on the social institutions which are referred to 'customs', conditions and institutionalised set of social activities through which habitus is acquired (Dewey, 1922/1983; as cited in Burkitt, 2002). These technologies inform practical action accompanied by practical reason, which aims to instil certain habitual actions in the body 'to give people the reflexive powers to reason about their virtues or skills, providing them with the capacity to refine, modify or change them (Burkitt, 2002). It is a means through which people produce themselves as human selves with everyday reflexivity. It is also the power of rhetoric of self-making work which aims to produce responsibilised subjects through 'an interpellation which constructs and assumes a moral agency and certain dispositions to social action that necessarily follow' (Shamir, 2008, p. 4). Such training is the process of instilling in the individuals the right reactions rather than the reason for an action. Dean (2016) utilises Bourdieu's habitus and cultural capital to explore the reason for a lack of class diversity in formal volunteering in the United Kingdom and argues that

the current policies are more of reinforcing participation of middle-class young volunteers than widening access to include working-class population. For young people from the middle-class, they have been socialised in an environment in which volunteering has been internalised as a normal ethics while planning voluntary work in working-class neighbourhood is already not talking the language of the community (Dean, 2016). This is also because middle-class parents see volunteering as an investment for later life of their children, whereas the working-class young people who are not brought up to see volunteering as part of their necessary habitus, the ‘culture of the necessary’ (Bennett, 2010, p. xxi; as cited in Dean, 2016), are more likely ‘to make virtue out of necessity’ (Reay, 2004, p. 433) and unlikely to attempt ‘what is anyway denied’ (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54). However, LiPuma (1993) argues, ‘Bourdieu provides no account of why the internalisation of the habitus is relative, in the sense that it is apparent to everyone that not all of those brought up in the same class or family adopt the same practices and, moreover, that he presupposes, but does not offer, a theory of the interrelationship between culture and capital, which is to say that those with the same financial resources do not necessarily behave in the same way, and the theory does not explain why’ (as cited in Nash, 1999, p. 177-178). Therefore, the relationship between individual agency and social classification is assumed but not developed. This also brings up the tension in the use of ‘habitus’ by Bourdieu as a generative structure that conditions practice versus by those who focus on communities of practice on structures that emerge from practice (Mutch, 2003).

Attempts to apply habitus to understand participation in volunteering are still very limited. Using Bourdieu’s habitus is useful in understanding how participation and practices are informed by dispositions as the frames of reference which are internalised during process of socialisation, and how the habitus serves as the basis upon which active strategies as well as value system of a particular culture play out. Bourdieu’s emphasis on unconsciousness however ignores how the active strategies of ‘deepening of personal responsibility’ act upon the pattern of thought and elicit responsible action that an individual necessarily follows to achieve certain ends. In light of this, the power of socialisation to impose social forms not only on thought but also on the physical behaviour of the body cannot be neglected. This thesis is then going to explore how active, conscious strategies or technologies of the self reconcile this limitation of habitus or interact with existing habitus in the process of socialisation, which explains the relationship between production of the moral self and choice made by the ethical subject.

### 2.2.3 Suzhi/Quality of the moral self

Moving further from conscious self-making process and unconscious inculcation of dispositions that inform moral actions and practices, *suzhi* is a particular and local notion of values in the Great China Region. While

habitus is embedded as dispositions unconsciously acquired, *suzhi* is the conscious accumulated value into the body which is embodied as certain level of quality (high or low) of an individual. In particular, *suzhi* is central to contemporary China's governance and society in the process of citizenship and in the understanding of responsibilities, obligations and rights that contribute to the cultivation of citizens. It refers to the 'innate and nurtured physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, and ideological qualities of human bodies and their conduct' (Jacka, 2009, p. 524). In the *suzhi* discourse, quality of a person is defined or measured by the worthiness of the body as human capital. *Suzhi*, as a form of quality, 'is not something that naturally inheres in the body but is rather something that must be built into the body' (Anagnost, 2004, p. 193). In other words, it is not a surplus value extracted from but something accumulated into the body. An individual is recognised as having value if value has been added to the body, a supplement to the 'bare life', through educational attainment or other strategies for the purpose of capital accumulation; qualified life is then distinguished through embodied capacities acquired through these strategies (Anagnost, 2004). It is also defined as the 'quintessential expression of how subjects are set up for the rational choice making that grounds China's capitalist transformation' to strive for social mobility, despite their distinctively different positions in the social hierarchy (Anagnost, 2004, p. 192). In the *suzhi* discourse, however, value of the body is first defined by the class, for example Anagnost (2004) distinguishes that between a rural migrant worker and an urban, middle-class only child. The politics of *suzhi* become a struggle for recognition as a body of value, in which some bodies are recognised as having higher quality than others and therefore more deserving of the rights of citizenship and good fortune. This also precisely serves to mask the difference between gaps (e.g. good and bad, rich and poor) by legitimising social inequality or exploitation that brings about wealth (Jacka, 2009).

The *suzhi* discourse has been discussed in relation to neoliberalism (see Anagnost, 2004; Yan, 2003). Accumulating *suzhi* to cultivate a moral self has become an everyday ethical practice for all people of different social class. In middle-class families, parents are adopting various strategies – projects of building quality into their children in order to produce neoliberal subjects (Anagnost, 2004; Yan, 2003); rural people have also been finding ways to increase their values. Yan (2011, 2013) looks into how affluent professionals in Beijing have formed a community among themselves to explore ways of becoming a nicer person, such as through active participation in volunteering; equally, rank-and-file and migrant factory workers are also guided by ethical principle of developing oneself through enhancing their skills and receiving more education in order to re-invent themselves into individuals with more values. Recruiters attempt to persuade rural young women to become migrant workers by suggesting that working in the cities will expose them to cosmopolitan culture and improve their *suzhi* (Yan, 2003). Interestingly, Fang (2013) has found that migrant workers treat working in the city as a stepping point in their life in order to 'see the world, to learn how to become a proper person'

(p. 77). This resonates the Foucauldian neoliberal developmentalism that individuals are made to become more entrepreneurial and autonomous. However, Kipnis (2007) has argued against interpretations of *suzhi* discourse that frame it as a form of neoliberalism. In his viewpoint, '*suzhi* discourse reifies rather than elides forms of hierarchical difference; it offers a way of speaking explicitly about class without using the word 'class' (p. 390). This 'blame the victim' but 'naturalise the victor' discourse is hierarchical and authoritarian rather than liberal or neoliberal; this notion of human quality is indeed used in governing contemporary China in myriad ways (Kipnis, 2007). Nonetheless, the authoritarian means may result in governable subjects with deposited mode of practice. For instance, the change from compulsory and paid blood donation to steady increase in voluntary unpaid donation in China has demonstrated the shift from obligation to a norm, a 'wanted to' practice (Jun, 2011). This has helped to add value to the people at the same time the capital accumulation process has been internalised into the habitus, albeit the means was authoritarian at first.

This rhetoric of neoliberal developmentalism or self-making is supported by the rise of new ethics in contemporary China. During the Maoist era, the meaning and value of the self was denied while collective interests were upheld through the slogans of propaganda such as 'seeking no advantage for oneself', 'pursuing benefits for others' and 'being a rustless screw of the revolutionary machine' (Yan, 2011, p. 42). Following the emergence of individualisation since the reform and opening-up in 1979, the Chinese individuals have developed a clearer sense of the self (Fang, 2012; Hsu & Huang, 2016). An individual's open claim of self-interest is more legitimate following an ethical shift from a collective system of responsibility and self-sacrifice to an individualistic system of rights and self-actualisation (Rofel, 2007; Yan, 2011). This is moving towards a moral landscape similar to that in the West characterised by a swing from collective to individualised responsibility (such as the example of volunteering discussed in Section 2.2.1.4). Individuals have to rely on themselves in their life-building process, which Ren (2013) has termed contemporary China after such transformation a 'risk society'. As a result, they have started to assume more responsibilities (Kleinman, Yan, & Jun, 2011), giving rise to the enterprising self and desiring self. Having said that, the ultimate end is the good of the country through various means of self-discipline and self-cultivation. Given the rise of new ethics among the young generation, the re-organisation of society has made it impossible for the government apparatus to mobilise people in the old Mao-style; a discourse which blends concepts of *suzhi* and self-actualisation with a concern for the common good is needed (Rolandsen, 2008).

The enterprising self refers to a proactive individual who makes a venture of his life, project himself a future, and seek to shape himself in order to acquire intended quality (Rose, 1992). Driven by market competition and social mobility, individuals are then more concerned about self-interest, resulting in 'a calculating self, a



self that calculates about itself and that works upon itself in order to better itself' (Rose, 1992, p. 143). According to Rose (1992), the language of enterprise articulates a political rationality to be translated into attempts to govern aspects of social, economic and personal existence that have come to appear problematic; enterprise designates a form of rule that is intrinsically ethical. The image of enterprising self is believed to be shared among the Chinese young generation in a way that they actively participate in different forms of self-development and recognise the responsibilities of individuals (Kleinman et al., 2011). It is admitted that self-interest is commonly preferred to common good nowadays, but people still acknowledge the importance of complying with standard moral rules and behaving with morality and courtesy, and disfavour being selfish and not caring about others (Hsu & Huang, 2016). The enterprising self, which is expressed through consumption and other forms of instant individual gratification in everyday life, is regarded as desiring self (Rofel, 2007). People have to become competitive and competent in order to be conceived to be successful as these are the key determinants and desirable personal qualities in contemporary China (Hsu & Huang, 2016). This is somehow still backed by the *suzhi* or accumulated values as the basis of judgement and action. In other words, such 'entrepreneurialization of the self' (Gordon, 1991) becomes internalised as a fable of self-making, entails possibility and desirability for self-development that qualifies the neoliberal subjects, and expresses the value or latent capacities of the body.

Following the trend of individualism and the rise of new ethics, it is believed that the collective ethics of responsibilities has declined (Yan, 2011). For instance, volunteering in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake by altruistic young people was regarded as a surprise given that most of them are believed to be self-centred, self-indulgent and irresponsible under individualism (Yan, 2011). However, this does not necessarily mean the lack of responsible individuals in non-Western contexts. That people have the freedom and availability of choices for making a life of their own and to quest for meanings has become a legitimate aspect of their everyday life as expressions of value and the self. Kleinman (2011) states that quests for meaning of the Chinese is a search for a good life: a life filled with pleasure. There is also an emergence of private philanthropy which is free from the state control of the old collective ethics of responsibility, 'a generalized notion of compassion and charity that derives from individual choice and that is applied to unrelated individuals outside of one's own circle of acquaintances or local world' (Yan, 2011, p. 66). The active appearance of those philanthropists on social media might be noted as moral selving; however, it is indeed setting up role models which encourage ethical action for self-cultivation, or technologies of the self.

In the Chinese society, an individual is becoming a person through the process of *zuoren*, or self-cultivation, which is to contribute to the end of becoming a moral person (Yan, 2013). The quality or character of an

individual in Chinese culture is signified as *ren* (仁; translated as benevolence) which could be accumulated by taking up more roles and obligations. This leads to the development of *junzi* (君子; translated as ‘superior man’ or ‘noble son’), whose *ren* makes him a moral exemplar – a role model of moral excellence in Confucianism who helps others in self-making and self-betterment (Humphreys, 2017). On the one hand, this encourages people to cultivate good character on themselves; on the other hand, it promotes exemplar morality through cultivating *junzi* for the betterment of society. Exemplar morality, or exemplarity, is defined as ‘a form of morality and social governance that seeks social order through leadership by example and emulation of role models’ (Cody, 2018, p. 73). Traced back to the principles in the Analects, emulation of exemplars is one of the most effective strategies for self-cultivation (Cody, 2018; Olberding, 2008). Up to the present, it is believed that exemplarity is still a visible characteristic of the Chinese moral landscape (Cody, 2018).

Distinctively, the notion of *suzhi* is loosely or sometime ambivalently in place in Hong Kong and Taiwan due to historical development that governance is not framed with such form of class distinction or collectivisation but higher degree of freedom and autonomy, especially among the younger generation. The sense of moral self at the same time has been changing in the post-Maoist era in the sense that the notion of *suzhi* has become fragilely maintained in the Region. Despite that, the traditional Confucian values historically situated in this Region are still existing and important as a dominant system of social and ethical philosophy that governs everyday life. The essence of *suzhi* discourse as the active accumulation of values to enhance quality of an individual is still useful in understanding the development and character of the moral self. Together with technologies of the self and habitus concepts, the analytical framework has taken some of its shape.

## **2.3 The moral self in collective setting**

Having discussed about the ontology and cultivation of the ‘self’, or the ‘moral self’ with a focus on the ‘self’, it is essential to further unpack the ‘self’ in relation to others in a collective setting. ‘Community’ is a commonly used but messy concept of social relations while it is an important concept that helps discern the meaning, constitution and development of the self with regard to the process of socialisation. In this section, I am going to review the being of the moral self through belonging and care on the basis of community.

### **2.3.1 Community and belonging**

Two distinctive ideologies – liberalism and communitarianism hold opposing views on individual freedom and idea of community. The most explicit critique is on individualism which upholds the principles of individual autonomy. Taylor (1991) sees individualism, alienation and instrumentalism as the ‘three malaises

of modernity' that lead to the disenchantment of the world and the loss of community. Arai and Pedlar (2003) also claimed that the crisis of identity and the social crisis of alienation and moral loss are the emerging social problems of the 21st century. Under liberalism, society is 'a meeting place for individual wills', for individuals to express their attitudes and achieve their satisfactions (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Weiss (1995) believes that this pinnacle of individualism 'forces individuals into a social setting and restricts how social that setting can be' (p. 171; as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Neoliberalism has successfully produced responsible and governable subjects but also more alienated (Kipnis, 2007). Thus, social relations are driven by competition and self-interest, resulting in a loss of trust, intimacy, mutuality and relationships in society, and then culminating alienation and social crises (Arai & Pedlar, 2003).

Communitarianism has received attention as a growing response to these crises. Etzioni (1995) defines community with a moral element, as he denotes 'communities are social webs of people who know one another as persons and have a moral voice' which helps to 'fill the moral vacuum' of contemporary society (p. ix). Communitarianism in the present days arises as an 'alternative lens to unfettered individualism' (Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p. 188), with an attempt to combine the notions of individual rights and freedom with collective responsibility, and foster the motives that connect people within the community (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Etzioni, 1996; Haste, 1996). Under neoliberal individualism or market-driven competitiveness, 'moral fabric of communities was disintegrating' (Bowring, 1997, p. 96), thus the communitarians call to 'restore civic virtues, for people to live up to their responsibilities and not merely focus on their entitlements... Communities draw on interpersonal bonds to encourage members to abide by shared values' (Etzioni, 1995, p. ix). The notion of human being central to communitarianism brings up the discussion of relational identity, 'we' versus 'I', implying that the common good of the community comes before individual rights. Etzioni (1995) stresses the importance of maintaining the functioning of the civil society through respect, self-governing and serving others. Here, what Etzioni highlights is not on 'doing good', but on the 'common good' as a result of group endeavour with meaning to them (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Communitarians regard humans as 'essentially social beings' and reaffirm the mutually supportive aspects of human life (Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p. 188; Frazer & Lacey, 1994). This make the context in which collective values of reciprocity, solidarity and community become more apparent (Arai & Pedlar, 2003), and thus an ethic of care and responsibility follows naturally as people are connected (Haste, 1996). One of the criticisms of individualism is that it does not see the significance of interdependence and obligations in society, the social capital within the communitarian framework attempts to overcome by its emphasis on cooperation, mutuality, trust and reciprocity (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Etzioni (1995) suggests that we should also expand our moral claims and duties by involving a responsibility to help outside communities whose ability to help among themselves is severely limited or

hampered, in order to avoid the risk and drawbacks of parochialism when people become indifferent to the lives of those beyond their realm of moral responsibility, which echoes what Strike (2000) called the 'ethic for strangers'.

This leads us to think about the notion of community and desire for belonging in present days before moving the discussion further. Community has been a contested term and concept in different disciplines as it can be conceptualised as a theory, method, place, identity/belonging, ideology, and policy and practice (Blackshaw, 2010). Community can be conceptualised with two moral dimensions, first 'community is good in itself' and second 'it speaks with moral authority' (Smith, 1999, p. 20). Selznick (1992) has identified significant values in the formation and nurture of a community, namely historicity, identity, mutuality, plurality, autonomy, participation, and integration (p. 361-364). Sandel (1982) explains that the sense of community does not only tell members 'what they have' but also 'what they are' (p. 150; as cited in Smith, 1999, p. 21), at the same time an attachment found rather than a relationship chosen that constitutes the identity.

Bennett (2012) categorises community studies into two groups: the old, original studies and the new studies since 1990. The 'old' studies tend to be focused on locality-specific social networks while the new ones more narrowly on particular aspects of the functioning of the community rather than the community per se (Bennett, 2012). Commonly, community is perceived as where people live and thus find meaningful interactions and social relations (Bradshaw, 2008). Johnston, Gregory, Pratt, and Watts (2000) conceive it as 'a social network of interacting individuals, usually concentrated in a defined territory' (p. 101). Davies and Herbert (1993) also adopt a place-based approach to understand the concept of community, but at the same time they recognise the fact that the kind of human activities and associations do not always take place in a designated area. Globalisation makes it possible for social relations to be uncoupled from place as people are not required to live in proximity to engage in meaningful relations (Sasson, 2001; as cited in Bradshaw, 2008). The traditional place-based community is being eroded, and thus 'place' in question is getting less locally bounded, a more outward-looking 'global sense of place' (Massey, 1997) is displacing the intimate togetherness of local community (Smith, 1999). In response, Bradshaw (2008) argues for a concept of post-place community as alternative perspective, which sees 'community in terms of the networks of people tied together by solidarity, a shared identity and set of norms, that does not necessarily reside in a place' (p. 5). The shared identity means the ability to identify membership, to become a member, and to be recognised by the members of the community, which altogether is associated with belonging (Bradshaw, 2008).

Community constitutes a web of relationships which forms relationality. Relationality here ‘extends beyond simply relating to another; it also includes a state of humanness that co-exists with the experience of being in relationship’ (Neville, 2008, p. 251). Community, deep in human aspirations, is an expression of the desire to experience a sense of belonging (Mulligan, Steele, Rickards, & Fünfgeld, 2016). Belonging is closely linked to identity and recognition in and from being in a community. Usually, belonging is conceptualised as intangible feeling and described as a sense of belonging. However, Bennett (2012) argues that belonging should be understood as practice, a way of being and acting in the world. Although her research was locality-specific, it offers a useful framework to see community and belonging. To have ‘a sense of belonging’ is passive, intangible and ineffable while ‘to belong’ is to ‘be a part of something, be accepted by others’ which is active, tangible and recognised by others (Bennett, 2012, p. 31). These are cultural and embodied, about the practices and the ways of doing. Belonging as the way of being-in-the-world is made tangible through the experience of being in relationships with people, things and place. Doing belonging can then be seen as a way of self-making, a process of bettering their relationship with others in society. Doing belonging engages people in relations by taking up moral responsibility and reciprocity. This enters the state of ‘being in a correct relation’ (Miller, 2003, p. 218), which requires living in an ethical relationship with the self, others and the environment. This reflects how the self is constituted and developed through experience of being in social relationships. This moral dimension of belonging entails reciprocated care that individuals do not exist independently of the society they live in (Bennett, 2015) or not simply being related to others. In such, the self and society are ‘mutually constitutive’ (May, 2011; as cited in Bennett, 2012).

This mutuality puts forward Buber’s (1958) concept of I-Thou relation to understand the mode of existence of human beings. According to Buber (1958), ‘I’ emerges from the dynamic relationship with others. The I-Thou relation is different from I-It relation in the sense that in the latter, others exist as objects fixed in space and time to be experienced while the former perceive others as subjects to encounter and experience with (Buber, 1958; Crossley, 1996). In other words, I-Thou relations are dialogical while I-It relations are monological; only through encounters in I-Thou relationship can the ‘I’ further the development of the self into the whole being (Buber, 1958). The mutuality in I-Thou relations allows dialogic communities to be formed and evolved through encounters; it also allows the claiming of membership of a community to be accepted. On the other hand, I-It relations predominate the modern rationalised societies in which people exist as individual entities (Crossley, 1996). It is pointed out that many people engaged in post-place communities are better networked than those in traditional place-based communities, which would mean the ‘local vacuum’ is less about a lack of community than a lack of interaction (Bradshaw, 2008). This then leads us back to the debates and criticisms on neoliberalism and the type of individuals produced. In the case of volunteer tourism,

more exploration and discussion are required on how the desire for community is embodied through the formation of temporary community of volunteer tourists and what kinds of relationship it entails which in turn facilitate the evolution of such community.

### 2.3.2 Geographies of care

As one of the key themes emerging from the ‘moral turn’ in geography, care is another key feature in the notion of community, as Etzioni (1995) associates community with ‘a place in which people know and care for one another’ (p. 31). Care can be broadly defined as ‘physical and emotional labour’ (Conradson, 2003, p. 451), and further categorised into ‘caring about’ and ‘caring for’. ‘Caring about’ encompasses emotional engagement in the sense of emotional concern about others (Silk, 2000) while ‘caring for’ involves active step of caring practice (Silk, 2000) in physical ‘tending’ which also implies effective translation from ethical intention to actual behaviour (Barnett & Land, 2007). As it involves either emotion or practice, or both, it is not a one-way process; reciprocity between the cared and the carer takes place, although it may exist over long timescales and in different forms of care (Bowlby, 2012). Caring and being cared can happen at the same time, which moves us from the assumption that being cared means undesirable dependency. The concept of ‘landscape of care’ is suggested to understand the geographical scales of caring relationship (Milligan & Wiles, 2010). Landscapes of care refers to the ‘complex embodied and organisational spatialities that emerge from and through the relationships of care’ (Milligan & Wiles, 2010, p. 740), requiring analysis of the spaces of care, the space-time trajectories and the variety of scales over how care is practised. Thus, ‘past experiences and future expectations and the various temporal rhythms and routines of care’ should be explored (Milligan & Wiles, 2010, p. 740). This requires looking at different ‘we’ relations which are created at different temporal spaces. This is particularly linked to the interpersonal bonds in communities, since for those who see caring relationship as the basis of ethics system, human relationships necessarily involve interdependence (e.g. Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Held, 2006; Tronto, 1993).

This kind of interdependence in human relationships extends the discussion to ethics of care. Ethics of care emerged in the 1980s based on a feminist understanding of emotive and relational morality (Gilligan, 1977). It complements the conception of morality as being rooted in rights and principles (Robinson, 2013) by embracing the notion of care representing a ‘social ontology of connection: foregrounding social relationships of mutuality and trust’ (Lawson, 2007, p. 3). Social relations are understood as contextual, which allows addressing the power relations underpinning them. Its value-oriented approach emphasises a morality that builds on the notion of attentiveness, responsibility and responsiveness (Tronto, 1993). The ethics of care in communitarianism emphasise mutuality and a relational rather than autonomous identity, which possibly the

reason for the criticism of traditional conception of community that it lacks tolerance of difference (Smith, 1999). This invites the discussion and consideration of the moral distance and the setting in which moral development takes places, as moral development can be experiential and relational. The spatial scale or spatiality of caring relationships is important in the sense that 'moral capacity is fostered, cultivated, and exercised within the social environment of the small-scale setting – or it is not acquired at all ... what is fostered here, in the setting of proximity, is the capacity for developing empathy with others', as explained by Vetlesen (1993, p. 382; as cited in Smith, 1999).

The discussion of geography of care has extensively focused on caring service, ordinary households and ethical consumption. Previous studies have tended to emphasise the situatedness of care in familiar places such as home as sites of care provision (Sin, 2010; Yeates, 2004), and who and what to care for is often based on partiality as the caring relationships are constructed on interconnectivity between people with similar identities on a particular locality (Milligan, 2001). One important theme in the discussions and debates on geographies of care has been 'distance'. This work is concerned with care to the 'distant others' or caring-at-a-distance (Silk, 2000) as in today's globalised world the local communities are increasingly stretched out in our imaginations. This enables connection of people living in different places through transnational networks and recognition of sameness due to our relations with others (Lawson, 2007; Massey, 2004; Popke, 2006; Sin, 2010). With the rise of responsible or sustainable forms of tourism, care for the distant others can be embodied through choosing this alternative type of tourism or ethical encounter with locals. This tourism space allows the enactment of care in-situ at reduced distance. However, how tourism spaces could be or are viewed as sites of care has not yet been explicitly discussed (Sin, 2010).

This tourism space provides a social context to actualise meaning of moral obligation. Given that, it is more important to understand how values can be effectively inculcated than only to have a set of values (Haste, 1996). In social contexts in which people feel engaged with and connected to other people, they are experiencing responsibility and caring/being cared which then become explicit and normative (Haste, 1996). Hence, it is through practice that morality is grounded, a hermeneutic awareness within communitarianism (Haste, 1996). The setting of moral development is not just about the social setting, but also about the place and people, as we have discussed 'post-place' community earlier. Ginzburg (1994) has pointed out that since Aristotle it has been recognised that the intensity of sentiments may be reduced with increasing distance from the objects, while Davies and Herbert (1993) have observed that relationships can be maintained over greater distance with the support of the global sense of place. It is thus worthwhile to explore the importance of

distance and settings on maintaining the community and caring relationship with the support of embodied morality.

### 2.3.3 Communitas in liminal spaces

After reviewing the geographies of care, the ‘setting’ in which moral development takes place requires further conceptualisation. This setting can be discussed in relation to liminality and the *communitas* produced in the context of volunteer tourism – a temporary community of tourists. Turner (1969) has extended Van Gennep’s notion of liminality to understand social structure and processes. It is a state in which wonder and realisation takes place, a phase in our social life in which the travel between the structure and anti-structure produces moments of understanding who we are (Turner, 1969). Three stages of change has been proposed – separation from the old, betwixt and between, and aggregation and return with a new status (Turner, 1969). All manner of possibilities could occur in the liminal, and people going through the stages could come out different (Turner, 2012). In this liminal space, what has been bounded by social structure in our everyday life is liberated, everyday practices and moral codes are disappearing or getting looser, with such characteristics as ‘equality, undifferentiated humanness, androgyny, and humility’ (Turner, 2012, p. 169). This liberation produces collective joy and unforgettable memories, a sense of comradeship and *communitas* – the state of being betwixt and between and people being treated equally (Turner, 2012; Turner, 1969). This sense of ‘unaccommodated human being’ (Turner, 2012) can be linked up with the sense of community, and the concept of ‘I-Thou’ relations by Buber (1958). This sense of community or *communitas* can be produced when people engage in collective tasks with dedication and commitment, resulting in enjoyment and at the same time a loss of ego (Turner, 1969).

This sense of levelling of statuses is ideally sought outside home and work structures. Graburn (2001) discusses tourism as a form of secular ritual which involves a transition from the ‘ordinary/compulsory work state spent “at home”’ to the ‘extraordinary/voluntary metaphorically “sacred” experience away from home’ (p. 43). Everyday life is shaped by rhythms by bringing place and time together (Edensor, 2012), so belonging is also rhythmic. Travelling comes as alternative rhythms to everyday life, resulting in different types of ‘we’ relations at different temporal spaces. In liminality, these everyday rhythms are suspended from the ordinary ones, bringing out a separate community and thus belonging. This transition allows tourists to forget the stress of everyday life and satisfies their need for a change (Graburn, 2001) or encountering the ‘other’. The collective joy and memories are believed to strengthen in time when people have to be apart, which is different from what was discussed earlier about the decreasing sentiments with increasing distance. This is because



Turner (2012) reiterates that *communitas* is not ephemeral, it folds over and back as it is 'not on our time scale' (p. 195).

*Communitas* has been applied to explore the volunteer tourism experience. Mustonen (2006) considers volunteer tourism as a type of backpack tourism, and theorises volunteer tourism utilising pilgrimage and liminality in tourism as reference idea, using two empirical cases in the Indian Himalayas. Mustonen (2006) further interprets that the volunteer tourists entering into the liminoid resembles the pilgrimage process in which time and place lost their meanings, and tourists' everyday practices and moral codes are disappearing or getting looser. Volunteers mostly do not want to follow a calendar as they are backpackers during part of the trip (Mustonen, 2006). This study focused on unstructured tourism in which individual tourists from different parts of the world come and go. This brings up the question of how the practices in the liminality would be different if tourists travel on an organised tour from the same origin. In a more recent study, Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) explored the existential authenticity in motivations of international volunteer tourists and their perceived benefits in Thailand, and explained the inter-personal existential authenticity using the concept of touristic *communitas*. Bonding and friendship among volunteers is developed when everyday norms, expectations and responsibilities are removed, interaction with strangers become easier, and 'inter-personal connections that are unlikely outside the liminal setting of volunteer tourism' are nurtured (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017, p. 8). The liminal space provides a pleasant setting for finding oneself and understanding others when the stereotypes are suspended. This may then contribute to having a new experience of the self which results in different forms of the self.

While volunteer tourism is positioned as a form of responsible tourism or moral conduct is assumed from volunteer tourists, it is interesting to look into the relationship between this nature of *communitas* and that of a temporary moral community of volunteer tourists (and locals), as well as to ask how this 'fold over and back' takes place within and then fosters or prolongs a transformative experience. It also asks the questions: how are ethics of care, responsibility and obligation enacted in a liminal tourism space? What ordinary ethics is that situated in the practices? This then ties up the analytical framework by understanding how the moral self is cultivated and experienced in relation to others.

## **2.4 Research gap**

Summarising the emerging lines of inquiry and debates in the literature, I am attempting here to highlight some of the issues to be addressed in this thesis. It has been stressed that it is essential to attend to the thick morality to recognise and examine what kind of people and practice belong to where. Meanwhile, current

literature around both volunteer tourism and geographies of ethics have still been largely freighted with Western ethical sensibilities and models. There has been a call for extending the discussion to the Global South or non-Western contexts. This research is to fill this gap by exploring the concept of volunteer tourism in Chinese societies in East Asia.

One of the debates on the volunteer tourism lies on the dichotomy between altruism and self-interest, resulting in a tendency of laundry-listing motivations and outcomes of one single tourist without looking at the broader structure and agency. In other words, there is a paucity of research examining what frames the motivations of going on volunteer tourism. In light of this, there is a need to study the complex ethical terrain of volunteer tourists instead of the discrete choice of an individual tourist. In addition, volunteer tourism has been perceived as a neoliberal activity or volunteer tourists as neoliberal subjects. Following the debates on geographies of care and responsibility that have shown growing interest in caring for the ‘distant others’ and caring at a distance, it drives us to analyse the rationalities of taking part in volunteer tourism and how this is embodied as having a category of moral subjects produced through the process. This moves further to understand what forms of responsabilisation and production of quality with regard to the *suzhi* discourse and broader Confucian traditions have been adopted in non-Western context. In order to unpack what shapes the frames of reference, it requires to develop a framework that helps the understanding of both unconscious dispositions and active technologies. This then employs Bourdieu’s habitus in logic of practice in examining how individuals are pre-adapted to appropriate ways of being and doing through internalisation of structured social structures in their particular social milieu; Foucault’s concept of technologies of the self in conceptualising conscious ways of constituting, organising and instrumentalising the strategies in self-forming; *suzhi* discourse in offering a cultural lens to the inculcation of moral values into habitus through more of institutionalised moral practices. All these together frames Chapter 4 aiming to explore the moral landscape in Chinese societies, specifically in Hong Kong and Taiwan, to understand how volunteer tourism becomes an appropriate choice of activity. It is to highlight the weaving between unconscious dispositions and conscious deliberation for a broader conceptualisation of rationalities in a culturally-specific context.

From the discussion on neoliberalism, responsible and autonomous but alienated ethical subjects are produced. With the distinction between ‘you’ and ‘I’, there is a growing sense of moral lack that people are looking for belonging and doing belonging in a community. Also, how tourism spaces could be or are viewed as sites of care has not yet been explicitly discussed. Especially when tourism space has been perceived as a liminal space, it is worth investigating what kind of community and *communitas* is formed and produced from the intense and intimate encounter in a temporary community of volunteers and that between volunteers and

locals, and evolved over time and space. How is doing belonging practised in seeking moral fulfilment and the lost sense of mutuality in current society, and how are such practices in forming the communities framed by ordinary ethics especially in a liminal setting? These constitutes Chapter 5 which aims to look at how volunteer tourists' quest for meaningful relations are embodied through the moral communities they are attached to.

It is argued that the current tourism literature tends to criticise rather than critique issues. This trend of cynicism is advocated to be changed in a transmodern paradigm in which people are seeking for a new worldview of higher values and more meaningful lifestyle through tourism. Volunteer tourism has demonstrated the potential to be transformational leading to self-forming. The connection between tourism and transformation is not new; however, the current literature tends to look at transformation as one of the reported motivations or outcomes. In order to look at its transformational value, it requires to focus on the process and spatiotemporal dimensions of transformative experience as so to evaluate the potential of volunteer tourism in bringing transformative benefits to moral self-making. Chapter 6 is going to attend to this discussion.

In sum, this research navigates morality through discussions on moral landscape, moral practices and community, as well as transformation using volunteer tourism as a subject of study, in response to Popke's (2006) call for a more direct engagement of ethics in social and cultural geographical research. In the following chapters, I am going to explore the becoming, doing and (new way of) being of the moral self through their participation in volunteer tourism in the Greater China Region, with a focus on Hong Kong and Taiwan.



## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

Fieldwork forms an integral part of this research project. It is not only the tool through which the researcher uses to collect data, but also the time during which the researcher engages with the researched community and space. While planning the fieldwork, I had to decide carefully where I wanted to situate my research in and how I could eventually achieve my research objectives and answer the research questions in an ethical manner. The aim of this research is to explore why people travel as volunteers; the purpose of the fieldwork is to gather data to map and construct a systematic and theoretical understanding of the rationalities and practices of taking part in volunteer tourism. ‘Field’ denotes where or with whom the research is to be conducted; ‘Work’ indicates what the researcher has planned to do, what is actually done, how it is done, and why it is done in a particular way. Therefore, in this chapter, I first explain and describe how and why the ‘field’ was identified and selected. Then, I outline the ethnographic methods adopted and the process of using those methods. Before concluding the chapter, I reflect upon the process of fieldwork in terms of ethics, positionality and reflexivity, as well as some challenges and limitations.

### **3.1 The ‘Field’ – Scope of this study**

In order to start the conversations with the researched population, we should have a ‘field’ marked off the everyday space and time (Katz, 1994). Most of the time, this site of enquiry is drawn by the ethnographer, defining in and out. As explained in Chapter 1, the idea of this research project was born from what has been happening in Hong Kong as I observed. Despite this, a justification is still needed for the focus of the research and fieldwork design. Thus, I will now delineate the scope of this study before moving to outline the ‘Work’.

Even though it is clear from the research objectives that this project is going to focus on non-Western volunteer tourists, there is still a large fraction reduced from the ‘global’ to be delved into. Research participants were selected from volunteer tourists coming from the Chinese culture which is distinctively different from the Western culture. ‘Chinese’ here refers to the Chinese language native to mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia and other places with Chinese communities, and also the traditions and customs from over 5000 years of development. The use of ‘Chinese’ to refer to the culture aligns with the objectives of this research to explore the cultural specificity of the rationalities and practices; it also tries to avoid any political sensitivity due to recent hostility towards the PRC Government in Hong

Kong and Taiwan. This research project was then delimited to focusing on Chinese culture in Greater China Region<sup>4</sup> (the 'Region') which comprises mainland China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (thereafter Hong Kong), Macau Special Administrative Region and Taiwan.

The Region itself is also culturally diverse. Among these four places, Hong Kong and Taiwan were chosen to look for research informants. This is because, firstly, overseas volunteering which is the focus of this research is very prevalent in Hong Kong and Taiwan comparatively, as seen from the extensively available promotional materials. In contrast, mainland Chinese mainly take part in domestic volunteering especially disaster recovery. This is due to the nationalised agenda and geopolitics that may restrict the focus and spatial mobility of mainland Chinese volunteers to take part in international volunteering (Ong et al., 2014). Similarly, volunteerism or volunteer tourism is not widely promoted in Macau. In addition, the colonial history and capitalist society with higher autonomy and freedom have added another layer to the thickness of the Chinese culture in Hong Kong and Taiwan and thus the data.

Multi-sited research is deemed appropriate for the research design. A multi-sited ethnography 'involves a spatially dispersed field through which the ethnographer moves – actually, via sojourns in two or more places, or conceptually, by means of techniques of juxtaposition of data' (Falzon, 2009, p. 2). Adopting the multi-sited approach – by involving two groups of volunteers from Hong Kong and Taiwan respectively – was not for comparison purpose; it was to achieve holism and take into account practicality. In terms of holism, I noted that the group size of voluntary service trips is usually small, with about 10-20 participants, and the duration of the programmes is short, around 5-21 days. Working with two groups of participants is to ensure a robust data collection with reasonable breadth and depth as this study focused on Chinese culture rather than a single site. At the same time, the practicality of recruiting volunteer tourists from the same site was limited by the timeframe of this study, availability of suitable volunteer tourism programmes and tourists' vacation period. Projects of a suitable duration for this study (lasting for at least a week) are mainly targeted at young people and/or people who could have longer vacation such as teachers during summer and winter vacations. Winter vacation in Hong Kong is from late December to mid-January while that in Taiwan is between January and February. A longer period of engagement by the researcher in the field would be more productive for the methods used in this context. Therefore, recruiting volunteer tourists from only one site means that the depth of the research will be compromised. In light of the above considerations, I found it more

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<sup>4</sup> The Tibet Autonomous Region is geographically one of the Greater China zones but not of 'Chinese' culture, thus not included in this case.

viable and sensible to involve two groups of participants from different geographical origins but who shared cultural similarities.

In this research, the field is less about the physical location or static community; it is the time-specific space with active engagement with the temporary communities of travellers. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the point of contact through which I could approach the volunteer tourists who appear at particular temporal and spatial coordinates. This was highly dependent on personal knowledge and contacts. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, there is no organised system or platform compiling list of sending organisations and volunteer tourism programmes. In light of this, I made use of my prior international volunteering experience by contacting the organisation I worked with in Hong Kong (further discussed in the next section). Having no prior volunteering experience through Taiwanese organisations, I navigated through the web of social relationships: I started by asking a Hongkongese friend studying in Taiwan who gave me a brief idea of the culture of volunteering on university campuses; then he connected me with one of his Taiwanese friends who has been very active in international volunteering; through him, I got some information about a few reliable and popular organisations with a wide range of programmes from which I selected one that was suitable for this research. Through this process, the landscape of volunteer tourism in Taiwan became more accessible for me.

It then comes down to the question of what I could do as a participating volunteer. Medical, teaching, orphanage, and community development volunteering are the most popular programmes offered (Go Overseas, 2014). I personally do not support teaching-only or orphanage volunteering, and I do not have any professional skills in providing or assisting with medical services. Thus, the type of volunteer programmes I could join was narrowed down to community development projects. In terms of destinations, the top five searched countries for volunteer tourism are the Philippines, India, Thailand, Nepal and Cambodia, clustering in South and Southeast Asia (Go Overseas, 2014). Cambodia was the destination of both projects I chose because it was the focus of work of the Hong Kong organisation that I worked with while Project Cambodia was the most established project among those offered by the Taiwanese organisation which I selected and managed to arrange collaboration (Figure 3).

### **3.2 The ‘Work’ – Ethnographic methods**

Due to the nature of the study, multimethod qualitative approach is deemed as appropriate. Qualitative methods are effective in obtaining in-depth understanding of the research issues such as opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences which are more complex and subtle (Denscombe, 2007). Ethnography is a

methodological choice which ‘privileges an engaged, contextually rich and nuanced type of qualitative social research, in which fine grained daily interactions constitute the lifeblood of the data produced’ (Falzon, 2009, p. 1). It allows the researcher to capture the social meanings of practices and ordinary activities of the researched in a particular setting of ‘field’, through participating directly in that setting, in order to collect data in a systematic manner but ‘without meaning being imposed on them externally’ (Brewer, 2000, p. 11). The value of ethnography has been recognised within ‘everyday’ studies to understand how people live their everyday lives out (Crang & Cook, 2007). This research requires understanding of ordinary dimension of action and aspect of thought, both tacit and explicit. Ethnographic methods were also deemed appropriate and adopted in previous studies with similar subject of discussion such as geography of care, responsibility and ethics (e.g. Burrai et al., 2017; Daya, 2016; Deng, 2015; Hall, 2011, 2016; Hughes et al., 2015; Johnston, Szabo, & Rodney, 2011; McEwan et al., 2015; Norris, 2015; Subrahmanyam et al., 2015; Varul, 2009).

Ethnography entails situational combination of field techniques rooted in the ideal of participant observation. Although these short-term volunteering programmes limited the extent to which I could get immersed into the researched community over an extended period, a multimethod approach helped to increase the thickness of the data. A combination of ethnographic methods – participant observation and personal interviews – was adopted for this research, which enabled personal and intimate interactions in episodes of contact instead of one-off meetings.



*Figure 3 Map showing destinations of two volunteer tourism programmes from Hong Kong and Taiwan*





*Figure 4 Map showing locations of the service projects  
TBW's projects in Kampot and Takeo; ELIV's project in Siem Reap and Svay Chek Village*

### 3.2.1 Collaborating with sending organisations

As mentioned earlier, the mobile temporary communities of volunteer tourists need to be identified through the sending organisations, as these are organised group travellers from the same origin. Before approaching potential informants for my research, two sending organisations – The Bucket Wish (TBW) in Hong Kong and ELIV International Service (ELIV) in Taiwan – were contacted for collaboration in recruiting research informants and acting as gatekeepers.

TBW is a student-led not-for-profit organisation founded by three university students in 2013 focusing on community-based sustainable development in rural areas in developing countries, primarily in Cambodia. The organisation is sustained on project fees paid by participants, and additional funding from the Centre of Development and Resources for Students in HKU and a leading youth development NGO, Youth Global Network of Breakthrough Hong Kong. The project coordinators of TBW are students who volunteer for both planning and organising the project and the community service work in Cambodia. Each year in January, TBW organises two parallel service project teams in Cambodia with local partners.

ELIV is one of the very first social enterprises in Taiwan established in 2010. They offer a wide range of voluntary projects throughout the year aiming for empowering learning through innovative volunteerism, improvements through understanding social issues and needs, and community development in different Asian countries including Cambodia, Nepal, Myanmar, China, and within Taiwan. Administrative costs and community development expenses such as construction materials are covered by programme fees. ELIV International Service Association was formed in 2012 as a partnering NGO only to receive donation to support the projects. Project Cambodia was initiated in 2012 and managed by Cambodia-based Taiwanese staff; now it is led by a Cambodian Project Manager and Assistant Manager.

To gain access to recruiting project participants to take part in my research, I signed up as a volunteer in one project by each organisation. This engaged me into the same time and space with my researched communities to conduct participant observation, and to facilitate personal interviews before and after the trips. Figure 4 shows the locations of the projects and Appendix 1 shows the contexts of the ‘village’ which will be mentioned in the following chapters.

#### *a) Working with TBW*

First, I joined the ‘Project A-Mangrove Planting x Community Mapping’ organised by TBW and mediated by a local NGO, Cambodia Youth Action (CYA) which has formed a partnership with the designated community, during 4-15 January 2017. This programme was largely based in the Trapeang Sangke Community, Kampot Province (Appendix 1a) for 10 days to volunteer for the mangrove tree plantation project initiated by the villagers. Volunteers were scheduled to collect mangrove seeds from the existing forest in the sea, arranged them in the seedling nursery site, and planted seedlings nurtured by previous volunteer groups in the sea, with the aim of restoring the forest lost from land clearance for private development but which is important for community fishery. The itinerary also included a relay to the construction of a footbridge along the river, community mapping to understand everyday life, cultures, and conditions of the local community, inspiration day to engage kids in stimulating creativity through fun games, cultural night and cooking challenge. Discussion, debriefing and reflection sessions were facilitated by CYA’s camp leader or TBW’s project coordinators. We also visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (also known as S-21) and Choeung Ek Killing Fields on the first two days and spent a free day on the last day of the trip in Phnom Penh.

Besides the time in Cambodia, participants were required to attend four pre-trip workshops for some topical and contextual discussions and preparing work materials. Four post-trip workshops were also organised to reflect on issues such as migrant workers and ethnic minority discussed in Cambodia but in the Hong Kong

context; the first workshop was a cultural tour to understand the so-called Muslim minority group and South Asian culture in Hong Kong; the second one reviewed and reflected on refugee issue in Hong Kong; the third one engaged the volunteers in a simulation of threats and difficulties faced by refugees in their home countries; the last one was visiting a few 'everyday' places of an asylum seeker in Hong Kong.

Although I could only volunteer in one of the parallel projects, the Chairperson offered to bring me along to visit Project B in Tanoun Village in Takeo Province (Appendix 1b) on 10-11 January. During the stay with Project B team, I was engaged in their routine, including doing grocery shopping, cooking and construction work as scheduled. I also had some interactions with the volunteers during their reflection session, and the Principal and teachers of the school where Project B was based in as they had frequent contact with the volunteers.

#### *b) Working with ELIV*

My second trip was to Siem Reap as part of the Project Cambodia organised by ELIV, which lasted for eight days during 4-11 February 2017. The Project aiming at community development emphasises sustainable development by engaging local community and training local staff, and understanding of local issues through visits and discussions. The service activities included building a house for one family and a toilet shared by five families in Svay Chek Village, inspiration day with students in the Leang Dia Primary School of the village (Appendix 1c), and an outing to the Angkor UNESCO Heritage Site (hereafter the Angkor) with some of the students who had never been there. This trip also consisted of a series of visits, including those to homes in the village to understand some issues such as burning waste and food consumption, factory of Kamonohashi Project which is a social enterprise founded to help women who suffered from domestic violence, charity restaurants and market, and Wat Thmei Killing Field. Discussion, reflection and sharing sessions took place almost every evening moderated by two project leaders, the Project Director, and/or the Project Manager. I attended a briefing and preparation session organised on 24 December 2016 in Taipei City during which participants of all projects taking place in January and February were put into the context through simulation games. We then met our project team #143, formed small task groups among ourselves and discussed about preparation work for the inspiration day.

#### *c) Recruiting research participants*

After I signed up as a participant, I started to approach the project members to invite them to participate in my research. The process of contacting other TBW's volunteers was rather straightforward; with the consent

of the Chairperson, I sent private message to all the volunteers and project coordinators, and all 21 of them agreed to participate.

In respect of ELIV, each volunteer team was directly managed by a primary team leader. At first, the Project Director passed me the contact information of the primary team leader of my team to ask for permission to invite my team members to be my informants. After the primary team leader agreed, I sent private Facebook messages to all team members before attending the pre-trip briefing. At the briefing session, I honestly told the group during self-introduction that one of my reasons for joining the service project was for research purposes. I approached some of the team members who were present on the day to ask for their interest in participating in my research, while the others replied on Facebook. At the end, 13 out of 17 team members (including two team leaders) became my informants.

### 3.2.2 Participant observation

Participant observation is the best way to understand practical everyday knowledge. Cultural knowledge is sometimes tacit; it is therefore usually difficult for people to answer questions accurately and clearly. As Bloch (1998) warns, ‘what people say is a poor guide to what they know and think’ (p. 3). There would be differences between what people say they do/did and what they actually do/did. Participant observation is deemed as appropriate in getting such non-linguistic dimension of action through being-with. To answer the research questions, I observed and noted what the volunteers said they wanted to do, what they actually did in the process, and how they bridged their experience and practices back to their daily life.

Several types of ethnography could be adopted based on the level of participation of the researcher. As Paul (1953) has pointed out, ‘participation implies emotional involvement; observation requires detachment. It is a strain to try to sympathise with others and at the same time strive for scientific objectivity’ (as cited in Musante & DeWalt, 2010, p. 28) (this ‘objectivity’ will be discussed in Section 3.4). For this research, I had chosen to be a participant as observer, as this allowed me to engage in my informants’ rhythms and routines, have a shared identity with the volunteers and become an insider of the group. Therefore, it was not just about ‘watching’; I did the same as other volunteers required for the project, had genuine interactions with the team members, and also jotted down observation notes. Spending time with the volunteers during pre-trip preparation, discussion and reflection, the time of voluntary work, and informal interactions such as eating together and commuting all helped develop understanding through involving in the spontaneity of everyday interactions (Griffiths, 2015). This facilitated asking meaningful and relevant questions during informal communications and personal interviews. Outside the time of the two volunteering projects, I continued my

interaction with these two communities back in Hong Kong and Taiwan. I joined reunions and informal conversations on social networking tools including Facebook, Instagram, and group chats on instant communication tools (Whatsapp and Line).

Before starting the observation, I listed some short questions and phrases relevant to the research objectives and kept them in mind. This assisted me in paying attention to some issues that I believed I might be less aware of due to familiarity, especially when ordinary ethics are embodied in a tacit way. This is one of the challenges of doing fieldwork at 'home' that we would not realise until then how much we know and how much we do not, and what we would easily neglect when things are ordinary. Hence, these aide-memoire phrases helped to maintain a certain level of objectivity throughout observation amid emotional engagement. These phrases included 'doing what', 'talking about volunteering', 'talking about helping others', 'treating others', 'family', 'everyday life', 'response to local practices', 'responses to practices of team members', 'interaction with locals', 'interaction among the team', 'values', 'I vs. others'. Observations of these themes revolved around a series of simple questions regarding the happenings: what, when and where is it? Who are there, how do they respond and why in that way? Field notes were taken in both written and audio forms whenever possible, but this was restricted by the nature of daily activities so that they were jotted down mostly at the end of each day (further elaborated in Section 3.4).

### 3.2.3 Individual interviews

Although participant observation is often said to be the cornerstone of anthropological inquiry, interview is crucial to complement participant observation as interviewing allows access to social interactions that are restricted or invisible through participant observation (Hockey, 2002). Interviews are thus legitimate ways of 'knowing', or 'conversations with a purpose' as termed by Burgess (2002, p. 102). Through these conversations, researchers could understand how people 'experience and make sense of their own lives' (Valentine, 2005 p. 111). This is particularly useful as the service projects were very short; interviewing enables more in-depth conversations to be held rather than merely observing and having informal dialogues in the compressed time of the trips. In-depth personal interviews were used primarily to explore why the informants travelled as a volunteer, how they talked about the encounter and experience, and whether and how they made changes after returning home. This helps in revealing their aspect of thought on what I had observed or what they had reflected on throughout the process. Instead of one-off meetings, serial interviews were undertaken before and after the service trip, enabling the researcher to understand complicated issues more in depth than in breadth (Crang & Cook, 2007).

Semi-structured pre-trip and post-trip interviews were conducted with a total of 34 volunteers. All informants were anonymised with pseudonyms. Demographics of the informants are presented in Appendix 2. Pre-trip interviews, lasting for 15-30 minutes, were mainly to understand each informant's idea and experience of volunteering (both local and overseas), reasons for volunteering, and expectations from the participation. This allowed me to draft questions for post-trip interviews in relation to their responses. However, I did not conduct pre-trip interviews with all Taiwanese informants in person due to time constraints. Instead, I sent the questions to some of them on Line and they replied with text or audio messages. Post-trip interviews were more extensive, lasting for 60-145 minutes. They covered questions from general concepts and thoughts about volunteering, responsibility, and issues they were interested or concerned about, to triggers of joining a voluntary project, their experience during the process, the way of telling others before and after the trip, and reflections. The interviews were exploratory in nature, thus semi-structured guided with aide-memoire. They were conducted in Cantonese and Mandarin with Hong Kong and Taiwanese informants respectively. They took place in various settings, ranging from public (e.g. cafeterias, open space on campus), to semi-public (e.g. Map Library in HKU and empty lecture room), and to private (e.g. interviewee's home, hotel room, and staff office<sup>5</sup> in HKU), all based on interviewees' preferences. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

### 3.2.4 Data recording and analysis

All the personal interviews, both pre-trip and post-trip, were transcribed verbatim. They were transcribed into Chinese and translated into English, and coded using the English transcripts. As this project specifically aims to widen the discussion to a non-Western context, I am aware of the linguistics of the data. Coding and decoding were conducted on the English transcripts. For some phrases which have been commonly used in the literature such as the notion of *suzhi* and teachings in Confucianism, I used the same pinyin expressions and included the meaning and Chinese characters in brackets. When I found phrases that I could not find an exact corresponding translation, I highlighted the phrases and put the Chinese phrases in brackets (as shown in Figure 5). I also kept a list of literal translation so as to standardise the translation across transcripts. For some phrases which could have several meanings or translation, I translated them according to the context of the responses, and put down all the translations of the same phrase on the list. For instance, as shown in Figure 5, the informant mentioned '身體力行' twice in the same line, but the act was slightly different. This phrase and its translations were then kept in the list and used accordingly in other transcripts. Despite the difficulty in translating the expressions from Chinese to English, it precisely explains the uniqueness of values and

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<sup>5</sup> I was given a private staff office in January-February 2017 kindly by the Department of Geography at HKU.

ethics in non-Western contexts which in turn reflects the specificity of the current literature weighted with Western assumptions and ethical models.

I think when you are there (身體力行), part of the project, then you would understand why you need to do this thing instead of just making a donation, if you walk the walk (身體力行), take action and participate in it, you will then know the meaning of this action and how to resolve the problems behind more deeply (深刻). I think making donation lacks the emotions, you just give them the money but you don't know what will happen following that. Volunteering allows you to know what the issues or problems are, or how you are going to look at the problems, and decide whether you should make the donation. After this trip, I may not be able to take part in all of the projects of this organisation, but I can participate in various ways, I can check their website to see what they are doing, and see if I should or want to take a part. I don't want to follow others to make donation blindly, or help others with the intention of doing something good, it's just like for feeling good (心安) or for good returns if I do something good, I don't want this. Rather, I want to go there to see what's happening

*Figure 5 Phrases were included in Chinese along the text of transcripts and translation of the same Chinese phrase into English varied contextually*

Prior to analysis, notes were made along the way of transcription. The notes in square brackets were to remind myself about an interesting point to look at when analysing the data; they were also the notes which linked between interview transcripts and observation diary. Figure 6 shows one of the examples. Based on the informant's sharing on the feelings or perceptions of making a donation and volunteering, I asked the question of what sort of values were running through or framing such kind of perceptions. Along the interview, we continued to talk about particular scenarios of donation and volunteering, which prompted more questions to be considered in the analysis and discussion together with other transcripts more broadly.

Analysis started with eight transcripts consisting both Hong Kong and Taiwanese responses. As the interviews were semi-structured, I began by looking at how the informants responded to the first broad question: 'When did you start volunteering? And why?' As the informants talked about their first experience of volunteering and volunteering overseas, I highlighted repeated phrases such as 'service hours', 'compulsory', 'school', 'taking new challenges' and 'family'. Service obligations in school and conflicted ideas of volunteering overseas or volunteer tourism between informants and their parents emerged as dominant themes. I then gathered more quotes from another eight transcripts and the rest on these dominant themes. Collating them as a pool of data allowed me to see what they told me. Coding from one or a few transcripts and rolling out to the rest may overlook some of the nuances in each interview. To avoid this, each interview was also analysed as a single narrative to draw out specific stories that would bring out more materials for one theme or a new theme. This also allowed me to connect the content and context with reference to the fieldnotes. For example,

when Adam was talking about the experience of in-group relationships and his feelings of what happened between him and the rest of the group, I brought together the observation notes on this story and compared his story with that of Quinn (discussed in Chapter 5). I then also gathered quotes related to how the rest of the group described and commented on their behaviour to draw out similarities and differences in the meaning and understanding of certain practices and behaviour. These two stories were more specific in elaborating the sense of morality and coequality among the group. Stories were then interpreted with the theoretical framework which attempted to understand the quality of the moral self and the moral self in a collective setting, and then were compared with reference to the literature to draw out differences and similarities.

I think for the locals, money can't interact with them. If you give them money, they receive it, and use it for doing something, what they get... even if they hire a construction worker, he just does the work, there is no emotional interaction. But having people going there, the focus is not on what those people do, but rather the relationship built through interaction. Like what I said earlier, they felt happy because of us doing something, but maybe it's not exactly because of what we did, but because of us being there in the same space, living together for a period of time, chatting and interacting, which brought them the happiness [what are the values running through?]. That's not something or impact money can bring to them. Another point is related to the participants, if we give them money, it will only have impact on the locals. But if we participate, those who participate will gain. As I said, the locals will feel happy as we go there, but this is mutually influenced, we participate and interact with them and we feel happy. That's the difference between sending volunteers and making donation.

Impact on myself, that's for sure. Like what I did yesterday, when someone asked for donation and I agreed with the idea, I immediately took my credit card out and donated NTD1000 or 1500. And many times we will get a gift from the donation, I usually forget it, like yesterday I got a parcel which I thought it's the dried fruits I bought, when I opened I saw the T-shirt, I was puzzled when I made the donation. It's just a donation, small amount so doesn't matter about the gift. [The intensity of the impact or value; The value of being, not about the objects but about what constitutes the experience or happenings at the time being there] But international volunteering makes some impacts on or changes to me to certain extent. For those issues, I trust those organisations, I agree with their ideas, so I just make the donation, no matter what they will do with the money, maybe those issues are not so relevant to me, like I have a boyfriend so the issue of homosexuality doesn't affect me, but I believe they can make good use of the donation, and I won't follow up how they will use the money. But it's different for international volunteering, the impacts on me, feedback I get from doing it are great.

*Figure 6 Notes made along the text of transcripts prompting discussion*

The structure of arguments and empirical chapters were guided by the voices of the informants. By 'voice' here I refer to the character central to the story reflecting what the story is and how the story was told. This way of structuring the arguments moved the analysis away from situating the researcher as the storyteller with an invisible voice along the writing, to forging a conversation among real voices of the informants while the



researcher as the participant was also part of the conversation so that the voices were represented with justice (Nunan & Choi, 2011). As I mentioned earlier, the process of analysis was driven by the data rather than imposing an analytical frame on the data from the beginning. This helped to lay out a flow of quotes built upon the linkages between responses and stories. This is supported by Dixon-Woods, Fitzpatrick and Roberts (2001) that 'qualitative data take the form of narrative, with themes and concepts as the analytical device' (p. 126). This approach helps to unveil the specific rather than the abstract, to reveal the languages and their nuanced in the unfolded experience in a temporal way and to allow the personal dynamics to reveal themselves in the practices and relationships constructed (Jones, 2004). For instance, Camellia's story was so intense and remarkable that several informants mentioned her stories and their feelings and reflections when hearing about the story. Hence, I used Camellia's voice to guide and frame the discussion which was attempted to understand the ontology of this particular social setting in relation to the moral self. Following the lines of this story, other voices were brought in to bring out broader issues such as how Camellia's experience was shaped by the Chinese culture and ethical framework through their reflections on similar encounters and general experiences. This created a dialogue among the informants to piece together the narrative or various narratives to reveal and reflect the issues and debates concerned, while my role was to interpret their opinions and feelings with reference to the analytical framework.

This approach also enabled less visible or new voices to be fore-fronted and projected from the fieldwork materials which could not be planned to collect in advance. One of these voices were those of the local volunteers. As this research attempts to partly explore the practices of volunteers and the forms of community constructed, it raises the question of excluding the local volunteers in understanding the experiences and relationship. However, this was one of the limitations that need to be acknowledged that local volunteers were not considered in the research design and fieldwork plan. The involvement of two local volunteers in the Hong Kong project was not informed until the team set off to Kampot City from Phnom Penh. This was further restricted by the availability of private time in the beginning of the stay in the village to explain my research and ask for consent. Instead of creating the distance before building rapport between the volunteers and myself in only 10 days' time, I chose not to ask the local volunteers to join my research. Rather, I focused on the interactions between the Hong Kong and local volunteers during the volunteering programme and interviewed the Hong Kong volunteers about their experience and drew from how they talked about the relationship with local volunteers. Despite that, I was aware that local volunteers' participation, experience and feelings could not be claimed solely from my observation and sharing by the Hong Kong volunteers.

Another new voice unveiled was regarding the discourses of sending organisations and their roles. The research design was not intended to include sending organisations since this project aims to unpack the ethical sensibilities that frame the act of participating in volunteer tourism. Having said that, many informants tended to refer to the promotional materials of the sending organisations when they were asked about why and how they decided to join volunteering. This provided an angle to follow up on how their emotions or perceptions when seeing the poster or website of the service project were framed during the personal interview. The informants also mentioned in various aspects how the sending organisations played a role in their encounters from the programme design to interventions and interactions between volunteers and project coordinators or team leaders during the trip. Through their reflections on the participation through the two sending organisations as well as my observation and experience as a participant, the discourses used by sending organisations in designing promotional materials and structuring the activities especially visits and debriefing sessions were unveiled and discussed. However, the voices regarding the sending organisations mainly came from the volunteers and team leaders as the Project Director or Chairperson of the two projects acted as the gatekeeper of this research in the field.

The theme of inter-generational difference in perceiving international volunteering emerged from the conversations on how the informants talked about doing volunteering prior to the trip and their experience afterwards. Having one senior volunteer participant in the Taiwanese group was not planned; his narratives were not representative but made invaluable support to the discussion. Nonetheless, the inter-generational difference in values and ethical sensibilities could not be simply claimed from one single informant in the sample. I drew on the interactions between the young informants and their parents or seniors, while the senior informants' opinions and experiences became a reference point against that of the younger informants such that the voices of the older generation were forwarded. This served the objective of unpacking the complex ethical framework on one hand and helped to partly address the limitations on the other.

### **3.3 Ethics, positionality, reflexivity**

#### **3.3.1 Procedural ethics**

Before doing a research project related to ethics in particular, I had to make sure I myself was an ethical researcher. Before the fieldwork, it is necessary to understand the broader ethical issues or dilemmas and anticipate specific ethical dimensions in the field. In terms of procedural ethics, formal ethical clearance was one of the institutional requirements before starting the fieldwork. This formal procedure led me to consider ethical aspects of practices including informed consent, anonymity, data protection, and conflicts of interest.

As mentioned earlier, the cooperation of gatekeepers was needed for initial access to the individuals to be recruited and overseeing the ethics of the access to informants. Further, a verbal summary of this research and uses of data collected was given to each informant. As the research was of an ethnographic variety of a period of interaction with informants, the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth (2011) recommends that ‘consent in ethnographic research is a process, not a one-off event, due to its long-term and open-ended qualities’ (p. 5). At different points in the field, the informants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point of time. As the research was planned, the data would be automatically anonymised. Although all the informants did not mind using their real names, anonymity is deemed appropriate to avoid any in-group estrangement arising from any comments on practices of the informants, either by the researcher or informants themselves. I also ensured that the data collected have been well-protected. All the recordings were stored in the laptop and Google Drive during the fieldwork, and files were removed from the Google Drive and transferred to portable hard disk after the fieldwork to reduce the risk of online leakage. The informants agreed that the data would be kept by the researcher for five years after the submission of thesis for dissemination of research findings to different audiences. As communicated to the informants in the process of obtaining their informed consent, this research project did not involve any external funding so no external bodies would impose any restrictions or requirements on the research process, at the same time the researcher or the University did not receive any benefits from this research.

### 3.3.2 Situational/Relational ethics

The fieldwork was not free from self-critique, challenges and limitations; there were moments of awkwardness, messiness and failures. Objectivity has always been emphasised in quantitative geographical research; however, it is impossible to achieve this kind of objectivity in qualitative research due to the high level of personal involvement between the researcher and the researched (Dowling, 2016). This is because we bring our personal histories and perspectives to the inquiry which in many times is informed by our personal experience. We are highly involved in social interactions and our feelings, moods and worldviews will directly impact on how we ask questions and what answers we receive (Phillips & Johns, 2012).

In this research, intersubjectivity is important. Intersubjectivity ‘refers to the meanings and interpretations of the world created, confirmed, or disconfirmed as a result of interactions (language and action) with other people within specific contexts. Collecting and interpreting qualitative information relies upon a dialogue between you and your informants’ (Dowling, 2016, p. 39). In these dialogues, or social interactions, the ways in which they perceive me, I perceive them, and we interact are determined and framed by social norms, to a

certain extent. This requires critical reflexivity to become aware of the nature of the involvement and influence of social relations (Bakas, 2017; Dowling, 2016).

Reflexivity concerns the ‘ways of seeing which act back on and reflect existing ways of seeing’ (Clegg, Hardy, & Nord, 1996, p. 4). This is a process to reflect on how the research is conducted and to acknowledge that the researcher is part of the research (Phillips & Johns, 2012). This means researcher positionality plays a role in the knowledge production. Researcher positionality involves having a self-reflexive stance; it is crucial for the researcher to consider the role of the different facets of the self in the field (Bakas, 2017; Rose, 1997).

In this field, I had several roles and identities – researcher, project coordinator, volunteer – altogether inquires the insider-outsider status. Being a researcher entering the lives of informants and spending a lot of time together blurred the positionality of researcher versus friend. I attempted to strike a balance between informed consent and establishing rapport and trust. During the process, I decided on ‘selective disclosure’. When doing self-introduction at the briefing session in Taiwan, I was honest to the team that one of my purposes of joining the project was for my research, on top of my interest in voluntary work in general. Since I had contacted them before the briefing session, I thought it would seem odd if I avoided mentioning it. Meanwhile, people did not look judgemental or suspicious. After we reached Cambodia, the Project Director and Project Manager asked us why we wanted to join and what we expected to get at the end of the trip, I did not repeat this purpose. It was because I did not want to give them the message – ‘be alert, she’s watching’ – which would lead to intentional modification of practices (Barbieri, Santos, & Katsube, 2012), although I emphasised to them at informed consent that this research was not planned to judge what they did. Also, I tried to avoid creating awkwardness or estrangement as not everyone in the team participated in my research. Due to the short time-span of the two projects, I was anxious at the beginning that I did not have enough time to get immersed in the field. At the same time, I was wary that I might show too many deliberate efforts in gaining rapport.

Embarrassment did happen. After the briefing session in Taiwan, I and one of the informants were walking to the other side of the corridor for a pre-trip interview. When we passed by the Project Director, he said to my informant (or us), ‘ay, going to be interviewed lor’. My informant only replied briefly, but I was wondering if the Project Director wanted to be interviewed, or to show that he knew about this research going on, or to remind me his role of the gatekeeper. I felt the embarrassment, as I did not intend to make my involvement as a researcher too explicit.

I was also very aware of my role in planning the TBW project as it might create a sense of authority or conflict of interests. As part of the collaboration and a form of reciprocity, I volunteered to assist in planning and organising the project by making use of my previous experience with TBW. My work included editing project proposals to apply for funding, cross-checking publicity materials, booking flight tickets and accommodation, booking venues for workshops and giving suggestions for local transportation and catering arrangements. This offered me the opportunity to attend their staff meetings during which I started building trust with the project coordinators who were also my informants. During the process, I was very conscious of this position as it might produce the power relation in which they had to listen to me because I was a veteran project coordinator of TBW. Despite the expectations to get better data, I did not want to participate too much in organising the volunteering project to avoid imposing any 'should-do' which might in turn frame the project in the way I wanted to see for data collection. It turned out to be a useful role because my previous experience acted as 'insider voices' that had helped them resolve some practical problems and doubts. This also made my visit to another group more legitimate, as I demonstrated the ability to help rather than only the privilege of a researcher. Being a researcher did help. Both projects involved the activity of home visit; volunteers were required to design the questions and flow of inquiring. My previous experience in conducting interviews brought me to the position of initiating the brainstorming session among my teams. This showed that I contributed to the voluntary project as a team member instead of a tag-along researcher independent and detached from the project.

Participating as a volunteer while researching on volunteers required me to remind myself the role and practices of being a volunteer. Especially academically informed about the reported and possible negative impacts brought by volunteer tourists to the local community and/or environment, it is very crucial to be aware of and reflexive in what I was doing in Cambodia. I did not intentionally avoid establishing any friendship with the locals; rather, I paid attention to with whom I became friend and the kind and level of contact I could and should maintain. Since my first service trip to Cambodia, I have engaged in friendships with local people which I was confident in maintaining. After that trip in 2015, I have kept contact with two of our translators and a family I visited as part of the voluntary work (collecting stories from migrants for that project). When I returned for the fieldwork of this research in 2017, I visited them as a friend as I promised to whenever I go to Phnom Penh again. From the second fieldwork trip, I have developed closer relations with our primary translator. During the trip, most of the volunteers had intimate interactions with the translator; after leaving Cambodia, I have been the only one maintaining regular contact with her as she said, except three volunteers who would contact her when they returned to Cambodia as the team leaders of ELIV. Besides our regular chat, I went to Siem Reap again in February 2018 to visit her and another translator friend who

has moved to Siem Reap as a friend and a traveller without a researcher agenda. On the other hand, I tried to avoid having unnecessary contact with children except the scheduled activities. Many volunteer tourists looked forward to playing with children on the service trips; however, I knew engaging with children will sadden them when we had to leave, at the same time, it would further complicate my roles. Although they were not my research informants, it is equally vital to handle the relationships developed during the fieldwork more ethically and carefully.

Being a Hongkongese seemed to be very outstanding among the Taiwanese volunteers; however, this did not appear as an obstacle for me to become part of the group, as we shared a lot of similarities in terms of political situations, cultures and history. I could also speak Guoyu (national language in Taiwan) instead of only Putonghua (standard Mandarin in China) and some Taiwanese Hokkien. My Guoyu accent made them feel I was a Taiwanese, enabling me to get immersed more naturally. Having previous experience in Cambodia was also helpful in developing rapport. With some knowledge about Cambodia, its history, cultures, practices and language, I became one of the points of information or advice. For example, I would remind other volunteers to look after their personal belongings in public space. This was also the reason for the team leader to pair me up with a fresh volunteer when allocating the rooms for our accommodation. I learnt some Khmer in previous trips to Cambodia, and some locals thought I was a Khmer with a bit of their accent and features such as long eyelashes. This enhanced interactions among the team including Project Manager and translators. All these created a sense of familiarity, making me a part of the team without feeling like an outsider.

Having become an insider, the question remained was how much I should involve in the informants' lives and when I should leave the field. This is probed by the status what Bakas (2017) refers as 'a friend but not a friend' (p. 127) or O'Reilly (2005) says 'one of us, but not one of us' (p. 36). Particularly in Taiwan, I travelled to different cities to conduct interviews. Several times, one informant joined me to go to a neighbouring city overnight for another interview after hers was completed; another two informants and I did a day trip in Taichung City and they offered me to stay overnight at their place; one also offered to show me around the city. This was their hospitality as they treated me as a friend, so I accepted the offer. During these trips, I spent time with them and waited until they asked to start the interviews. I did not want to dominate the time which was partially leisurely. I left it for them to decide when they wanted to enter the time of being interviewed. I believed this 'hanging out' was part of the process of gaining trust and developing rapport, and also my commitment to maintaining friendship rather than transient membership of the temporary community of volunteers. This was to allow the informants, as De Munck (1998) suggests, 'an opportunity to watch, meet, and get to know you outside your "professional" role' (p. 41). For example, when I and one Taiwanese

informant travelled to another city, we exchanged a lot on our thoughts and personal stories during the several hours of driving. That time-space was not arranged for observation but after the trip I had a deeper understanding of the informant in terms of her relationship with family and values. The mix of reunion and interviewing blurred the boundary between being a researcher and a friend, and intensified the perceived tension between extracting data and developing a genuine friendship.

After the trip or even personal interviews, my informants and I still maintained our friendship through social networking tools especially after I returned to the UK. However, I was not sure whether they thought I talked to them only for 'watching' or getting more data from them, although I mentioned at informed consent that their voluntary participation would end when all interviews and project activities were completed. Therefore, those online interactions which were part of their everyday life could be regarded as part of the participant observation. What I did was to make sense of their posts and our chats rather than 'creating a scenario' to gauge their responses. This lengthened the time of participant observation beyond the spatiotemporal restrictions. This led me to think whether I had hinted to leave the field, or whether it is possible to leave completely. After the fieldwork, I travelled to Cambodia again one year later and hanged out with a few of the Taiwanese team members and the translator; one of the Hong Kong team members came to the UK to visit. These relations and interactions took place outside my professional role, reaffirming the possibility that I may not leave the field completely or the option that I do not need to signal very clearly the end of the fieldwork, while I recognise it is normal and reasonable to maintain the friendship. Maybe it is the messiness and awkwardness of 'ethnographic intimacy' (Frohlick & Harrison, 2008) from engaging in nuanced understanding of embodied complexities that have kept me in the proximate and emotional closeness with the field, or it is our 'habitus of collectivity' constructed during the process.

Looking into reciprocity means we are concerned about the issues of power in the researcher-researched relationships and how it can be done in a more ethical and realistic manner (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001). As a researcher, we always hope to get enough data, quality data, and a better understanding of the subject of research in order to answer our research questions. In order to gain access to the researched community, we develop our trustworthiness which is built upon the decisions of the researchers from how we ask the questions and what we say about the people who speak to us and their stories. Due to the compressed timeframe characteristic of tourist experience, I shared similar anxiety of not spending enough time with the informants or in the field as suggested by Frohlick and Harrison (2008). Thus, I attempted to talk to each of them as much as I could throughout the projects. Kirch (1990) warns that 'relationships between interviewer and interviewee often end abruptly once the researchers have finished collecting the information that interests

them' (p. 30). After short, one-off interviews, the informants are usually left uninformed or uninvolved in the later stage of knowledge production. Having this in mind, I was prompted to think what I owed the 'field'. Although trust does not necessarily entail reciprocity, I had a *felt* need of giving back especially because our process of knowing as a researcher relies on the researched community. As we enter the researched community with an agenda, we hope to leave with something in return to soften or compensate for the unequal researcher-researched relationship. Sometimes, we may take the easier ways of giving back such as organising a workshop to report the findings to the researched community. Such gestures of reciprocity seem like 'ticking the box'. It is posited that the unequal nature of the researcher-informant relationship could not be altered with reciprocity (Huisman, 2008; Zinn, 1979), thus leaving without promises or gestures of reciprocity could possibly be better than giving irrelevant return. For these mobile and temporary communities of volunteer tourists, admittedly, this research project is not going to produce any outputs directly and significantly impacting them. Despite that, I hope to return with something concretely co-produced with the research informants allowing them to own part of the knowledge produced throughout the process as they empowered me as the researcher to present the data in the form of knowledge (Weiler, 2009). However, this was not explicitly promised upon informed consent or at the end of the fieldwork due to the lack of capacity, in terms of both time and resources. This requires careful planning to engage them in the dissemination of further co-production of knowledge as I think the reciprocity could be considered beyond the timeframe of the degree towards which this researched is conducted. Therefore, in the meantime, a written report of summarising the findings requested by ELIV's Project Director would be a reasonable form of reciprocity to the field by bringing their voices to a non-academic audience. It would hopefully provide some references for the sending organisations to adopt and adapt their projects which in turn would benefit returning volunteers or future participants in this wider field.

### **3.4 Challenges and limitations**

Of course, things did not always go as planned. One of the challenges was uncertainty of participation from volunteers in my research. In designing the fieldwork plan, I expected to have pre-trip trainings from ELIV as well and thus sufficient time for contacting volunteers for participation and conducting pre-trip interviews. Nevertheless, only one one-day briefing session was organised in Taipei City while not all team members showed up. Even for those who went to the briefing, they were from different cities of Taiwan; they did not stay in Taipei City overnight. This led to the conundrum: I had to invite them on Facebook or Line for participation at the very beginning, even before we met; only two replied with consent and we scheduled the pre-trip interviews on the following day; three other volunteers agreed to participate when we met at the



briefing but were not free to stay behind for interviews. I received response from some others only after I left Taiwan. Therefore, I could only send the structured questions to them and they answered the questions on Line as they preferred. This resulted in receiving relatively brief responses to the pre-trip interview questions, although I asked for further elaborations or clarifications.

When doing personal interviews with the Hong Kong volunteers, a few of them pointed out that they had not had enough time for self-reflection after returning from Cambodia because the new semester started a day after the trip. Hence, they found it difficult to sort their thoughts during the interview. This led to my reflection on the timing of conducting interviews and better understanding of those silent moments. However, the process of interviewing facilitates critical reflection that helps push towards a critical pedagogy (Hammersley, 2014; Henry, 2019). I then embraced those silent moments when I asked them to talk about what they did and how they thought about the experience, as those were possibly the very first moments of their post-trip self-reflection when reminiscing the time in Cambodia.

There were also practical concerns. There were only three weeks between the two trips to Cambodia, during which the Chinese New Year fell on the third week. If the interviews with Hong Kong volunteers had not been conducted before the second trip, it would have to wait after all interviews with Taiwanese informants were finished in March. I was concerned that the memory would get 'cold' if the interviews were conducted two months after the trip. Therefore, I arranged the interviews right after each trip to capture the fresh memories.

Another challenge was taking fieldnotes. The effort in registering observations at the moment of occurring was restricted by the nature of the work and roles of the researcher as a participant. For several days of the first project, we had been working in the mangrove forest or seedling nursery site, making instant note-taking almost impossible. Besides the work we had to do, we had our daily routines such as cooking, cleaning and washing up during breaks. In the village with the ELIV group, everything was team work, including construction, inspiration day, home visit, rotation of serving lunch, and even going to toilet (we were building a toilet for the neighbourhood on two of the days, so we had to walk together to the toilet in another neighbourhood). On the one hand, as a researcher, I wanted to take out my notebook and log my observations as I had planned. On the other hand, if I took out anything to write, it would seem too obvious to others that I had shifted to the researcher role and such disclosure might make them become cautious and behave differently, reducing spontaneity. I became more cautious after once one volunteer saw me writing on my notebook and asked what I was doing. It could probably a general question simply asking what I was doing

at that moment. However, because of my researcher role, I heard it as a question wanting to know what I had written about them. Hence, I often attenuated my presence as a researcher in order not to disrupt the rhythm of their experience but to create contact zone of engagement with trust. At the same time, as a participating volunteer I could not leave my positions of responsibility to hide somewhere to scribble my notes, not to mention that there was indeed nowhere to hide especially when we were doing construction work in the Svay Chek Village. All these restricted and suspended note-taking at times of happening, situations that have been reported in previous studies using similar methods (e.g. Barbieri et al., 2012), and it relied on memory and constant flashback at the end of the day or even after the trip as sometimes I could barely have a few keywords down on my notebook or mobile phone. Despite this, the advantage of observing as a participant was engaging myself in the intense experience simultaneously with the research informants, allowing me to rebuild the scenes from the scribbled keywords afterwards.

Mediating bias when taking fieldnotes was another limitation. As a biased human, I must acknowledge how my gender, cultural values, prior experience in international volunteering, and multiple roles in the field and theoretical approach of this study shaped my observation and subsequent analysis and interpretation. As mentioned in Section 3.2.2, I might sometimes overlook some issues or practices due to ordinariness and familiarity. Observing and interpreting a situation as an Asian female could also be different from that done by, for example, a non-Asian male researcher. Due to my previous volunteering experiences, I might have some presumptions or biased views and attitudes towards certain practices or informants' responses. This could possibly be alleviated by systematic fieldnote-taking so as to maintain certain level of objectivity, but I have to acknowledge this limitation of doing ethnography by a biased human. Having said that, subjectivity may facilitate understanding the world of others through showing sympathy and empathy, which would help to unveil the underlying meanings of social constructs and in turn implications of our biases.

### **3.5 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has given an overview of the process of entering and leaving the field. Besides seeing what methods were most appropriate for achieving the research objectives, addressing some of the concerns of positionality and reciprocity accentuates the intricacies of knowledge production through qualitative research. Viewing positionality is a critical factor in framing the social and professional relationships in the field. Probably it is not feasible to fully resolve the tensions, dilemmas and unequal relationships, it is necessary to grapple with and reflect on the ethical dimensions of research and continue to involve ourselves in a 'spiral of self-reflexive cycles' (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 563; as cited in Huisman, 2008). While I attempted

to reflect on the methods used and positionality and negotiate some challenges throughout the process, I had to acknowledge some other ingrained limitations and let them live on. As Rose (1997) reminded us,

*we cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it. What we may be able to do is something rather more modest but, perhaps, rather more radical: to inscribe into our research practices some absences and fallibilities while recognizing that the significance of this does not rest entirely in our own hands (p. 319).*

Having said that, the process did not end when we, as researchers, have written up the methodology chapter. As research is an on-going, dynamic process involving changes, constant attention and reflexivity are required. Writing-up is a reflexive tool as part of the analytical process. The informants are the active participant during the data collection, they decide what to tell us, then we are the one with the power deciding what to write. As the researcher is the person who has chosen what to research, how to conduct the fieldwork, and what/how to write about it, we bear the responsibility to convey our research findings in a clear, coherent, compelling manner (Hay, 2016). Our role is to unpack the thickness of the data by constructing a reading of the entangled, multiple layers of meaning of different action or speech. The course of going through the data and thinking about how to tell the story in the best, lucid way may also probe into more questions and further analysis. It is thus not simply to produce something very exotic, but to render them meaningful. The following chapters are the attempts to tease out the entangled and construct a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973; as cited in Falzon, 2009) of 'why people travel as a volunteer'.



## Chapter 4 Touring Moral Landscape in Chinese Societies

This chapter is going to explore the moral landscape in Chinese societies, specifically in Hong Kong and Taiwan, under the trend of volunteer tourism. By looking at the complex ethical structure, I am going to investigate how volunteer tourism has become the appropriate choice. As discussed in previous chapters, the existing volunteer tourism literature has extensively focused on the individual ethical concern made by an individual agent. The assumptions about responsibility lie in the individual agency and participation in volunteer tourism activity as a discrete choice of a single tourist. This has resulted in an emphasis in debating on the absolute dichotomy between altruism and self-interest. However, previous studies have rarely looked into what frames these tourists' motivations. In other words, what do these motivations mean in volunteer tourists' ethical sensibilities in their daily life? And how is participating in volunteer tourism as an ethical action informed by those ethical sensibilities? In addition, volunteer tourism has been conceived as a neoliberal activity or volunteer tourists as neoliberal subjects. Following the debates on geographies of care and responsibility that have shown growing interest in caring for the 'distant others' and caring at a distance, we are driven to analyse the rationalities of taking part in volunteer tourism within a broader theoretical framework.

This requires us to understand how moral values are inculcated as dispositions which inform the individual to act morally as well as how the individual is responsibilised to take part in volunteer tourism. In other words, I am not going to explore the set of ethical choices created for individuals to act morally. The concern here is an embedded framework of predispositions about what choices are made. Unpacking what shapes the frames of reference entails developing a framework that helps the understanding of both the unconscious dispositions and active technologies in a particular cultural context. Doing so, this chapter employs Bourdieu's habitus in logic of practice in examining how individuals are pre-adapted to appropriate ways of being and doing through internalisation of structured social structures in their particular social milieu. On the foundation of dispositions, Foucault's concept of technologies of the self is used in conceptualising how conscious ways of constituting, organising and instrumentalising the strategies in self-forming act upon the existing habitus. The *suzhi* discourse is also consulted in offering a cultural lens to the definition of a moral self, as well as the inculcation of moral values into habitus through more of institutionalised moral practices and moral exemplarity.

As to explore the ‘cultural’, I am giving a bit more on the cultural context and value system before moving further to the discussion with reference to this value system. In Chinese societies such as Hong Kong and Taiwan which have been influenced from their colonial legacies, core values rooted in their Confucian tradition can still be noticed. Confucianism, which has been the dominant philosophical teaching in Chinese and other Asian societies for thousands of years, is a traditional system of social and ethical philosophy as a way of governing or a way of living rather than a religion. There are no separate sacred institutions such as churches or temples; social life in social institutions such as family, school, state or society are where the values are practised. Ritual is a medium through which religious sensibility is expressed, both religious and sacred, but not as sacrifices asking for the blessings of the gods; rather, it embodies the civilised and cultured patterns of behaviour (Bell, 2017). Rituals in Confucianism have both aesthetic and ethical dimensions, as rituals ‘give Confucian personhood a sense of enduring continuity connecting the present self to the ancestral past as well as to the future generation that is yet to come. That shared sense of common humanity in turn propels the Confucians to go beyond their immediate circles of family and friends into the world at large’ (Rosenlee, 2016).

These ‘rituals’ are also applied to social interactions, signifying accepted standards of behaviour. Confucianism confirms the acceptable values and norms in human relationship in which people have specific roles and obligations in order to perfect society. When love is the maxim of Christianity, *ren* is the heart of Confucianism (Ma, 2014). *Ren* is the source of all virtues, and the intentional cultivation of *ren* is a ‘spiritual practice’ (Rosemont, 2015). A ritual performed with *ren* nurtures the inner character and further ethical maturation of the person. Taking more roles and obligations helps to develop *ren*, the quality or character of the person. This is then linked to the concept of *junzi*, a person whose *ren* makes him a moral exemplar. A *junzi* is a role model of moral excellence in Confucianism who helps others to better themselves (Humphreys, 2017). Put into the social interactions in the contemporary context, the personhood developed in relation to others allows the individuals to go beyond the narrowness of individualism, as freedom in Confucianism is seen ‘as an achievement term, not a stative one, such that we can only begin to think of becoming truly free when we want to meet our responsibilities, when we want to help others...and enjoy being helped by others’ (Rosemont, 2015, p. 106-107). This then involves *guanxi* (social relationship) and *qing* (sentiment) which are closely linked to *ren*, *yi* (righteousness) and *li* (courtesy). Through cultivating good character of people, *junzi* or moral agents are hoped to be formed for the betterment of the society, and it is the embodiment of freedom. In the following, I am going to explore and understand how this cultivation of good character of people is actualised in the form of taking part in volunteer tourism.

## 4.1 Appealing discourses of sending organisations

*The photos, some children having class, not sure if it's the classroom context, a few photos in the village [Figure 5]. They looked happy, but as they were in poorer places, their clothing and classroom setting were very basic and crude, but they smiled happily, so I wanted to see what I could do to help them a little bit. (Selina, Interview, 24/1/2017)*

The objective of this research is not to explore the mechanisms or marketing strategies of sending organisations in mobilising people to volunteer overseas, but through interpreting the marketing materials, we can analyse the prompts used by the sending organisations and why their language is appealing enough to make one to participate in volunteer tourism.



Figure 7 Project poster of TBW in 2016

Source: Original file from TBW

From the marketing materials such as the programme websites and posters, an image of the destination or the problem is constructed by the sending organisations playing on sympathy. As Selina said above, the poster of the first service trip she joined showed the poor conditions of the school (Figure 7). The year after, elements such as ragged kids in a poor village narrating a food scarcity problem were used in designing the poster (Figure 8). These visual representations conveyed the message that volunteers were needed, their help was needed. Speaking with these images, on the website, at the information session and pre-trip briefings, staff from both TBW and ELIV highlighted the ability of the volunteers to make a change, or 'it's time for change'. Meanwhile, volunteers believed the need for making a difference without questioning the concrete outcomes

of the projects or the limits of the volunteers in making a change. For example, Jasmine who for the first time joined a service trip in her Year 1 said,

*I didn't think about the question of whether they could do what we were doing, I thought they would need help as long as a service trip was organised... I think they welcome volunteers.*  
(Interview, 24/1/2017)

The sending organisations were responding to the motivations of volunteer tourists to make a change, which has been reported in the findings of many previous studies, while the doing of good was unquestioned. Here, the language of development used in the posters tend to produce and reinforce the notion of 'Third World' and the imagined problems, similar to that used for gap year projects in the West in encouraging students to do development with a 'get on with it' attitude and assumed ability to do it (Simpson, 2004). However, what has remained unpacked is what these materials or messages really speak to? How do they speak to the ethical framework of these potential participants so that volunteer tourism becomes the appropriate choice? This requires a nuanced understanding of the ethical framework within the particular value system and traditions.



Figure 8 Project poster of TBW in 2017  
Source: Original file from TBW

The idea of 'service' is put forward and reiterated by the sending organisations, making volunteering a 'good' thing to do. Volunteering is 'nice' or 'right' because on the one hand, it has been well-received by the local community according to the organisations; and on the other hand, it is conceptualised as a form of 'sharing'



instead of ‘help’ or ‘aid’. This is particularly apparent in marketing resources on the website of ELIV as they have been advocating community development through understanding and cooperation between locals and volunteers (Figure 7a&b). Instead of constructing a sense of entitlement in the way that the volunteers are sending aid to the volunteered who lack agency, which has been commented about Western participants in previous studies (e.g. Simpson, 2004, 2005), the organisations are instilling a notion of responsibility by prompting the need for an ethical action. This typology helps to streamline the ethos of sharing instead of helping, and thus the act of volunteering itself. It rationalises the opportunities offered to the individuals to actively participate in actions to resolve problems shifted from the state or firms to the individuals (Burchell, 1993). The sending organisations ‘elicit, promote, facilitate, foster, and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents’ (Dean, 1999, p. 32; as cited in Barnett et al., 2010b, p. 44). They are able to mobilise individuals to participate as they highlight the ability of the individuals to share, at the same time speaking to their felt responsibility and urge to become a global citizen. These individuals are being actively responsabilised, making volunteer tourism an appropriate activity through which they experience and conduct themselves. This assumed responsibility is the result of governing through dispositions and practices of individuals rather than society (Rose, 1996). In the following sections, I am analysing how these practices or actions are informed by their ethical framework of predispositions inculcated through different social settings, and what the notion of ‘good self’ or ‘moral self’ means in this cultural context. On the basis of the discourses used by the sending organisations, I am going to navigate the moral landscape of the Chinese volunteer tourists in order to gain an insight into the interplay of different values in rationalising this choice of activity.



*Figure 9a & b Pictures on the ELIV website showing activities of Project Cambodia*  
 Source: ELIV (2018)

## 4.2 Instrumentalisation of service

*... volunteering, I have wanted to do for long, but we did not have formal channels to participate, as it was not common in the past in Taiwan, very few purely voluntary in nature, more of informal ones, service type, such as promoting hygiene education in village, initiated by local community, or small groups in some governmental offices or departments, maybe go to help harvesting when there were a lot, all were voluntary, less institutionalised. This started 20-30 years ago, it almost did not exist before that. (York, Interview, 22/02/2017)*

The notion of service emerged as a prominent, recurring theme from interviews. Service has been extensively promoted in schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The idea is encapsulated in school mottos to convey the values, ethics and principles to bring inspirations on education and even life. These mottos guide students in thinking about what kind of a person they want to become and what they should do, thus extending their actions beyond schools. Particularly in Hong Kong, many schools were established and supported by religious bodies, mostly Protestant, Catholic and Buddhist, in which the religious ideas and values of cultivating characters such as compassion, empathy and kindness and eliciting practices are embedded. These mottos, although they encourage the accumulation of good quality in the students, emphasise extending care to others.

For instance, Helen said,

*our school motto is 'Omnia omnibus' which means 'All things to all people', that we should serve others, serve people around us. So, I have developed such concept or idea that in our daily life, we not only do things for ourselves, we can also see if we can do anything to serve others. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

'Service' was used more often than 'volunteering' or 'help' by the informants. Public service or volunteerism is not new in Asia, and in Hong Kong and Taiwan in particular; but service learning has been adopted into the formal education only recently. Service learning was originated from several American activists who envisioned service-based education that built off their experiences in civil rights movement in the 1960s, corresponding to the ideas of the American philosopher John Dewey who emphasised learning by doing, or experiential learning. Such approach to education inspired the formation of voluntary programmes such as the Peace Corps and VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America), and subsequently these programmes' officials and some university students organised a conference in which this pedagogical approach to education was defined as service learning. It is defined as

*[a] course-based, credit bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112).*

Service learning has become a key experiential learning component of the new curriculum in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In Hong Kong, following the introduction of a new educational structure in 2009, Liberal Studies has been re-introduced (first appeared in the secondary school curriculum in 1988) as one of the four compulsory core subjects (Deng, 2009). This subject aims to

*help students understand themselves, and their relations with others and the environment in which they live. The intention is not to turn students into specialists in any well-defined academic field, but to enable them to become informed, rational and responsible citizens of the local, national and global community [Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (HKCDC), 2007, p. 4].*

Practically, the intended learning outcomes of Liberal Studies are achieved by instrumentalising service learning or learning outside classroom. Service learning is the device or strategy in instilling a certain set of moral values which inform the act of volunteering as the ethical and rational choice. Other learning experiences (OLE) or experiential learning experiences such as moral and civic education, community service, aesthetic and physical activities are emphasised to bridge the subject materials into practices; service learning approach is the major mechanism to motivate active participation outside classrooms. For example, Ona said that she was required to earn experience hours under OLE when she was in secondary school, while Gloria had to fulfil compulsory service hours in summer vacation during her junior secondary school years. Similarly in Taiwan, a new 12-Year Curriculum for Basic Education has been proposed and reviewed in 2010 and implemented since 2014 based on the three ideas ‘spontaneity, interaction, common good’ to reform (Chen & Fan, 2014), while volunteerism in general has been promoted since the 1970s. Among these, the idea of ‘common good’ encourages learning not just for oneself; students should not care about themselves or their immediate circles only but also the wider society and the world. Service obligation in schools in Taiwan was mentioned as a graduation requirement; similar model was also practised in some universities in Hong Kong (Ma & Chan, 2013). Xena said,

*it's compulsory service in school. We had minimum service hours as graduation requirement, all over universities in Taiwan, it's quite common and encouraged. I remember in Year 1, we had a class, I forgot the theme, our teacher brought us to volunteer, we went sweeping the floor. (Interview, 21/2/2017)*

The idea of global citizenship is coming through both education reforms; the promotion of the concept of global citizenship is the agent of mobilisation through effecting changes in the frame of reference. This theme is specified under the Module on Identity in the Hong Kong Liberal Studies curriculum framework (HKCDC, 2007), although it is not explicitly highlighted in the new curriculum in Taiwan<sup>6</sup>. Informed about their

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<sup>6</sup> A few Taiwanese informants said the phrase ‘global citizen’ (or 世界公民) has still yet been widely used in school but started to be circulated by NGOs.

relations with others, human and non-human, students of this generation have developed a felt responsibility which is no longer limited to the local context or an enclosed society but rather extended to the wider, global issues or community. This has helped to instil the notion of being a responsible world citizen on the young generation in particular. Learning other cultures and having new experiences are examples of response to this widely promoted concept of global citizenship. As Helen said,

*people would say, young people should have a global vision, so I want to understand different cultures and know what is happening in other parts of the world, that's the concept. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

However, based on how this phrase – global citizenship – is used or talked about, the concept does not seem to be clearly understood and in turn has become a buzzword. It seems that the kind of activities were not the matter of concern; rather, it just became the requirement, part of the degree. Here, volunteering is made as a responsibility to graduate, which would mean that it does not come from ethical considerations, or even an activity unquestioned by the students. As when Daphane said, ‘we always hear about global citizenship, which makes you feel, ya, taking care of yourself is not enough, shouldn’t just think about yourself’ (Interview, 25/1/2017). Under the influence of global citizenship education, students have been conditioned to be more responsive and thus responsible for narrative calling for understanding and actions against global issues. Therefore, when Selina first saw the poster of the service trip she joined, she wanted to help those on the poster, as she said, ‘I feel like we have been taught since secondary school that we should help others if possible, as we are all living in the same world, those concepts, global citizenship’ (Interview, 24/1/2017). This response speaks to the active dissemination of discourses of responsibility through lectures and other formal school education activities instead of their personal motivations or initiatives (e.g. doing good things in this case). The students are mobilised when the narrative and practical resources are made available to ‘enable them to act as “responsible” subjects’ (Barnett et al., 2010b, p. 40). Their response was not necessarily about the broader social and environmental issues; rather, it was the act as the logical, unquestioned choice for being ‘responsible subjects’. This is, as Shamir (2008) suggests, ‘an interpellation which constructs and assumes a moral agency and certain dispositions to social action that necessarily follow’ (p. 4). It has reconfigured the roles and identities of the students into global citizens (Beck, 1992; Kelly, 2001), attributing such qualities and statuses to these responsibilised agents. Whether the accumulation of service hours would help the production and accumulation of moral capital, however, requires further discussion in the following, as it is determined by how the students perceive and receive such service hour accumulation mechanisms, and by other values at play.

Under the active dissemination of discourses and availability of opportunities in schools, volunteering has become a collective action among peers. Together with the strategy of institutionalising service as a graduation requirement, informants believed that a culture of compulsory volunteering has grown in schools. Strategies such as point earning system and service award scheme have helped to create an atmosphere where students are very active in joining service activities. Positively received, some students regarded it as a new experience instead of a service obligation. It is a unique experience in the sense that it is different from joining student societies or attending lectures; this relatively new form of extra-curriculum activity came as something they 'want to' rather than 'have to' do. For example, Xena said, 'the several volunteering experiences with the teacher were kind of letting me know what volunteers are doing, starting to know more about this field, and wanting to participate more' (*Interview, 21/2/2017*). It does not necessarily become a discrete choice of doing good made by an autonomous individual; it could simply be an instrumentalised appropriate choice. In other words, their active participation or positive attitude could possibly be a kind of response to the culture, the requirements or the availability of such new options in schools instead of the need for volunteers. These positive responses to the strategies have helped to inculcate dispositions, instilling a notion of responsibility. For instance, Florence hoped to become 'a person who can help others' (*Interview, 26/1/2017*). This has further empowered them with the idea that 'they can' rather than simply 'they should', resulting in a category of moral subjects created. Embedded in these responses and actions, it is the cultivation of their inner character and ethical maturation, *ren* in Confucian term. Taking up more responsibility and helping others guides them along the pathway for self-betterment and becoming a *junzi*.

On the other hand, not all the informants found the strategies of instilling moral values which will inform ethical actions useful in promoting volunteering. Because it is a graduation requirement, students would treat it as a duty or a task instead of developing it into an interest or a habit. For instance, Selina said 'I was not personally motivated to do it, but just wanted to get it done' (*Interview, 24/1/2017*). That students challenging what was believed to be appropriate or reasonable would then interrupt the production, accumulation and reproduction of moral capital (Davey, 2012). This did not become an appropriate ethical practice for them but a tick-the-box thing-to-do. It did not facilitate internalising the disposition that the students became genuinely wanting to help others. Rather, the choice has been internalised as the thing they 'have to' do; this is different from the moral serving process through which the individuals actively develop themselves to become more virtuous. It is also different from responsabilisation strategies discussed in the literature that lead to an interpellation making volunteering as an unquestioned choice. Such that, they have become the institutionalised and instrumentalised moral subjects instead of responsabilised moral subjects. Therefore, it is not just about the question of forming a habitus; it is also the technologies of the self which 'permit

individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and the way of being, so as to transform themselves' through instrumentalised practices (Foucault 1988a: 18). In other words, it is an instrument in school, a structure, through which the conduct or the behaviour is determined. At the meantime, the students have the agency not to perceive volunteering as the choice to take in the process of doing it involuntarily given that it is the activity 'to meet a target number of service hours' (*Selina, Interview, 24/1/2017*), when the technologies of the self are exercised within the structures of coercion or domination. Although some students did not respond to these strategies positively, the culture of compulsory volunteering is internalised and ingrained; the dispositions have added another layer to the habitus and they might behave subsequently in modified ways reproduced from the dispositions. In this sense, the promotional materials speak to the institutionalised service obligation and/or the active dissemination of the notion of global citizenship.

This is the case of service-learning approach but different from the gap-year culture in the West. Gap year is no longer about dropping out but rather travelling as a global citizen. Simpson (2005) has also noticed that gap year is increasingly getting incorporated into formal educational and employment structures and institutions by being tied to formal education and better access to employment with a language of such as 'success' and 'graduation', meanwhile autonomy is still embedded this decision. On the contrary, it is more than a 'something for the CV' thing in the case of Hong Kong and Taiwan; it is largely framed by the service obligation and institutionalised culture of volunteering. It is also different from the 'ethical citizenship' in the changing landscape of volunteering in the West as noticed by Cloke et al. (2007) that in this case the service obligation denotes a 'dutiful citizenship' with a focus to develop a virtuous identity.

### **4.3 The good self in different generations**

Family has been reported as one of the main sources of values guiding moral actions such as helping others and volunteering. Family is usually the first place from where learning starts. In present days, Confucianism is still the dominant social and ethical philosophy informing ethical thinking in East Asian families. One of the Confucian values strongly relevant to human relationship starting from the family is the idea of relationality – the starting point and foundation of our ontological existence throughout the lifetime (Rosenlee, 2016). As Rosemont (2015) points out, 'for the Confucians there are only interrelated persons, no individual selves' (p. 93). From this, it is irrelevant to consider a person as either selfless or altruistic in Confucianism, when the individual bears some roles and obligations, and living those roles and obligations in relation to others is to produce their existential personhood. Although *ren* – the core value of Confucianism – tells the importance of benevolence, everyday social interactions are guided by differentiated ethics. Helping others

was of very ordinary ethics especially in agricultural communities in the past when families were giving hands to harvesting or looking after kids in the neighbourhood. Such value is still in play in informants' families especially when they observed and experienced how their parents treated the proximate such as immediate family members and relatives in relation to the distant others. For examples, both Charlotte and Xena explained that in their families, relatives would help each other if needed but they did not have the idea of helping 'those you don't know', or the 'others'. People care for others based on their relations, resulting in rich emotions that maintain the ties among people. This could be explained with Ethan's story of how his grandmother treated her family's domesticated animals and neighbours. He said,

*I was living in mainland China for two years when I was small. My grandma told me many bizarre stories, about how she took care of her cows, stories about looking after my mum and uncles. Also, the story about a chicken she had kept for 10 years, that's her first chicken, it was a rooster which crowed very on time every morning and brought her a lot of fun, so she kept it until it died. Another story about a cow which fell down the slope and could not work in the farm, but they sold it until they needed more money for living. She was unwilling to kill it. My grandma was quite compassionate, she easily cried over little things, for example someone's father in another village passed away, then she reminisced the time she had with that grandpa in the farm... full of emotions. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

This is how people in Confucian societies are brought up. As we can see here, people treat 'others' based on a moral standard derived from their relations with the 'others' rather than a logical framework based on justice, the ideas of *guanxi* (social relationship) and *qing* (sentiment). In this example, the relations developed with the domesticated animals (although not human beings in this example, they were very close to her heart) surpassed the rational considerations and decision-making, as a symbolic expression of *qing* (sentiment). The emotion and connection with people are based on the strong sense of concentric realms of care. This particularistic ethics of care is acceptable and reasonable in Confucian families as care should be extended from the immediate family to relatives, community and the state when the roles and obligations are fulfilled from the core. That Ethan thought the stories were bizarre would imply that this Confucian focal value is not as widespread as before. This is the quality of a person in traditional values which are taught in the curriculum. In Hong Kong, the earlier senior high school syllabus of Chinese Language and Cultures constituted selected literature texts on traditional philosophies and cultures. However, the recent curriculum reforms both in Hong Kong and Taiwan have brought in the concept of global citizenship and reiterated service learning as the pedagogical approach, which has altered the scale and radius of conceptualising care and responsibility. This has, to some extent, changed students' perception of responsibility and then geography of providing care. When such concepts as global citizenship and service learning arrived in the curriculum of the younger generation, they had more effects on the habitus of the younger than the older ones whose values were already deeply ingrained in their habitus that it is less prone to change. Especially it was the time when active

strategies and applications were implemented to instrumentalise service obligation in schools while traditional Confucian values were passive and implicit rules of the game, the basis of structuring the experience has been restructured. New pattern of thought has emerged from the formalisation of services and implementation of the new curriculum. This could help explain why, interestingly, most young informants did not flag up this ethics of care among their generation.

Here, it is a new ethics of care and helping others found more distinctively among the young people. 'Others' is perceived differently between generations; no longer being limited to the 'proximate others', people have started to extend their care beyond their circles of relations without attending to the ethics such as fulfilling obligations to parents before other proximates and strangers. This differentiated ethics was particularly regarded as 'old' ethics of the previous generation by the informants. For example, Ona, who was 20 years old, said,

*my mum always thinks we should help as long as we can, but her value is more for helping friends instead of society, she sometimes says if she can help others, why not? I am kind of influenced by her. But I think I am different from her generation that I should look at a broader context rather than just people with closer relationship. (Interview, 18/1/2017)*

More strongly, parents of the informants think that people should look after themselves. Camellia said her parents are more traditional, tend to focus on their own things, mind their own business, with 'no extra time to think about others, look after yourself first' (Interview, 25/2/2017). This is, however, opposing the value of the younger generation according to which they should not just care about themselves although individualism is prevalent. Rather, the young people are more influenced by the school education which encourages a global vision and active participation in resolving global issues. They may have escaped the habitus acquired earlier, at the same time they have been mobilised by the strategies of formalising service in schools, 'restructuring the structuring'.

Even in families in which helping others or volunteering was supported, it was believed that it should be done in a humble and modest manner. It is a virtue to be humble rather than making everything public. Virtue signalling is not considered acceptable for a person with *suzhi* in traditional Chinese culture; people prefer not speaking about personal or family issues, or otherwise talking about it in a reserved way. Unlike some others' criticisms, for instance paying to volunteer being not reasonable or even ridiculous, Wendy's father did not think it was bad. Despite that, he thought volunteering should be done or seen as an ordinary practice. When Wendy was working in ELIV in charge of marketing, her father thought her marketing strategies were too explicit and the marketing materials were too grandiloquent. In light of this, he told her that doing



voluntary work should be kept low-profile, instead of making an announcement that 'I go volunteering, it is amazing, it is great'. He saw volunteering as an opportunity given by others to the volunteers to help. While it is the responsibility of the sending organisation to prevent creating rhetoric or over-mobilising people, it is an ethic of the individuals not to talk 'too loud' about themselves volunteering to avoid virtue signalling. Rather than a sense of entitlement, humbleness in Confucian family values comes in to negotiate with the ethics of globalising responsibility and practice of virtue signalling. As Wendy said,

*a bit earlier, he reminded me that, when others allow me to help them, I should thank them, because they give you the opportunity to help them, or they are willing to be helped, you may think this is good for them and do it on them, but it is not always good, so he thinks I should be thankful if they are willing to give me the chance to try, instead of saying like 'see, I'm here to help you'. (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

Traditionally, obedience and obligation are two of the ways of displaying ethics of filiality. Children are expected to obey what parents say, and to take good care of parents at their elder age. This has resulted in slight tension between parents and children in traditional families when the children want to be independent from their parents, enjoying the freedom of doing something different. However, in many Chinese families, people still do not express their thoughts or emotions through words directly; rather, they prefer doing it to show what they think or feel. Xena, for instance, found it hard, or she was hesitant to talk about doing something different from her parents' expectations. At home, she usually followed what her parents said as a well-disciplined child. Thus, she was looking for volunteering as a way to learn how to express herself and also as a platform to share her feelings with others, making volunteering itself an expression of freedom and autonomy. On the other hand, Amelie's experience showed a more direct and explicit conflict of values between generations. Feeling frustrated in persuading her mother to understand her participation in service trips, she explained,

*she was against the idea of me being a Special Educational Needs (SEN) teacher, and doesn't understand why I volunteered for the kids every year, she even doesn't understand why I always like leaving home to other places to build houses, or volunteer in Qinghai before ... In Year 1, I saw the voluntary project related to education organised by Waker, but my mum thought it's dangerous, and she was worried about me going overseas alone, so I had a battle with her every year. I had had this determination and persuaded her every year, but she ignored me every time. Until Year 4, I was determined to go, as the will was getting stronger and stronger, I had to go... so I decided to work as my mum didn't support me to go, and then negotiated with her after I had earned enough... I worked a lot and saved quite a lot of money. Later, my mum saw I was so determined that she promised to pay half of the fee, and let me go in the final summer... Right, this is a way of travelling overseas, that's the first time of travelling overseas without mum... I told my mum, I was planning to go to Cambodia, to build toilet, she did not bother to respond. She asked, 'why going there? Why not travelling with me instead?' Because I promised to go travelling with her after being a teacher, I had not fulfilled that promise, so I postponed joining the Cambodia project. As I had been volunteering related to education, so I was not so sure about projects of that nature, and because of my mum, I*

*decided to travel with her in 2015 summer. In 2016, I thought I couldn't postpone it. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Amelie's mother did not understand why she volunteered especially during her free time when she should relax or stay at home. However, this is not in line with Amelie's values in helping others as the way of spending her free time and volunteering as the way of travelling. This, to some extent, explains the presence and operation of layers of dispositions in habitus acquired outside home such as school from where she had the first volunteering experience. Over time, the desire for volunteering arising from the sense of care has not yet been fading out despite her mother's disapproval, which had driven her to empower herself through earning the programme fee, to negotiate and silently confront her mother with an opposing value. Meanwhile, in this field governed with Confucianism, the rules are still in place to be obeyed. As Confucianism has been historically and culturally rooted as a way of governing and a way of living, people could not escape the rules of the game although not everyone is devoted to or actively enacts its values. Amelie still has the duties and obligations to fulfil at home as a good daughter before taking up more roles and obligations outside home. The moral relations are still being governed by Confucianism around family which is the centre of relations and thus fulfilment of responsibilities of roles is still emphasised. Here, it is not about the conflict between travelling for good cause or fun – the dichotomy of altruism and self-interest – one of the lines of debate in the current volunteer tourism literature. It is rather about the contradiction of ethics of filial duties and helping the distant others. Although the younger generation are enjoying and advocating for more freedom and autonomy and also feeling for more responsibilities, they are still bound by a limit of possibilities. In other words, habitus has enabled the production of different forms of practices that are unpredictable but still reasonable falling within the limits of the regularities (Bourdieu, 1990b). Comparatively, York, who was in his early 60s, said the ethics of family duties was more prominent in his generation. Volunteering was not the choice partly because they had more family obligations to fulfil. As he explained,

*the primary condition for helping others is to make sure yourself are well-managed so that you have the ability to help others, regardless of the intensity, after yourself, so you can extend it to caring for your family, friends and further to others. Whether it is right or wrong, I think it is, you can extend the care and help to others when you have the ability. When you are not doing well but helping others, that's strange too. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Generally speaking, individuals have the freedom and choice to maintain or withdraw a certain role once they reach the age of reason such as adulthood. However, this is not the same as foundational individualism in a Confucian perspective when the 'self' is always part of a social relationship. Such kind of relations do not count for individuals' choice. Although the informants did not directly highlight their desire for freedom from

their duties in the family, they were looking for some forms of independence from their family as both the filial piety and global citizenship were in place in their ethical schema.

As the first point of learning, family plays a significant role in inculcating the habitus since the individuals are brought up with the family values highly influenced by Confucianism. Instead of mobilising the cultivated moral subjects for actions, the transmission and translation of values into habitus and cultural and moral capital are more focused on the cultivation of the quality of the person in the aspects of *ren* as the core value and other associated values, and roles and obligations of the self in relation to others. The production, accumulation and reproduction of various forms of capital is undertaken through demonstration and observation, practising rather than ‘preaching’, in a Confucian way as the informants said. Meanwhile, socialisation outside the family has added another layer to the habitus, which possibly challenges the existing modes of thought. During the process of inculcation and accumulation of different forms of capital and then the translation into practices, the reflexive power of the technologies or strategies in other social settings enable people to refine or modify attitude to achieve their ultimate goal of self-making. Inter-generational differences are thus seen when the traditional and new ethics are entangled and conflicted.

#### **4.4 Identifying quality of a good self**

Many times, the values of care, responsibility and doing good are tacit, unspoken. Internalising these values as a quality of an individual is not simply a direct give-and-take or teach-and-learn process. Besides formalising volunteering as the technology or instrument, exemplarity is another strategy. Exemplarity is the form of social governance through emulation of role models. Identifying the moral exemplars helps to demonstrate and define the quality of a good person, which is effective in promoting and facilitating self-cultivation and accumulation of *suzhi* or quality (Cody, 2018; Matsuba & Walker, 2005).

##### **4.4.1 Moral exemplars in family setting**

Values such as helping others and extending care to others are not circulated verbally; they are more embodied in practices in the ordinary aspects of everyday family life. Parents tend not to verbally convey the message or value of helping others, doing good deeds, or being a good person; on the other hand, they diffuse the values through demonstration to set a role model in their daily lives. For instance, Bella explained she learnt the importance of helping others from seeing her mother doing that in the daily life, although her mother was not interested in volunteering. Even through small moves such as assisting an elderly to cross the road, her mother’s practices have been influencing her by revealing to her the doing of good. She said,

*my mum... she would help with very little things. For instance, when we went shopping and saw an elder woman pushing a cart of cardboard box paper, she went up to help her, or when we saw beggars, she must ask me to donate some money, sometimes she would also buy some meals for them. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

This role exemplarity allows the moral values embodied through everyday practices to be seen and gradually internalised to form a habitus. Ilisa also shared a similar example in her family. Parents try to promote the learning of ideas of *ren* and *suzhi* (quality) of their children through good practices in ordinary life rather than just in moral dilemma. Xena shared that when she was small, she observed how adults treated others which, in turn, became her way of treating others. She said,

*as I grew up in rural area, we had close relationship with our neighbours, we offered help whenever they needed help, so I saw such behaviour from my parents since I was small, in an environment that everybody was helping each other and doing things together. So, I help others as long as I can. (Interview, 21/2/2017)*

Although the values were tacit, unspoken, they were internalised through learning from observing. Xena's parents have acted as her role models; her practices were informed by these dispositions which might also be translated into different actions. Similarly, Florence learnt from her parents that 'I should treat others well, something like that, treat others well, polite, shouldn't be bad or mean to others' (Interview, 26/1/2017). Taking it a step further, she believed that she could help anyone in need, in a more universalistic approach, unlike the traditional concentric value. The focus was not on the question of altruism, but the transformation of values internalised through observation of role models in everyday life into informed practices as the logical choice. This also shows the transformative potential of dispositions acquired, as the habitus does not only produce practices unconsciously but also enable the individuals to reproduce the structure, generating a wider repertoire of possibility of action and practice. For example, Florence found the need to expand the radius of helping others partly because of her increased exposure and socialisation in university. She explained,

*... since you were small... oh I went to schools in the New Territories, for what we were exposed to or what we saw, when compared with other kids, especially when I entered university, seems I didn't see as much as they did. Although I learnt a lot, when compared with people from other schools outside the New Territories, I feel like, something is missing. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

Especially under the culture of global citizenship, the self-evaluation of Florence, to some extent, shows the set of dispositions acquired from the social group. In light of her difference from the others in the university, she realised the need for shaping, building and sculpting herself into a better person and thus she started to 'do more'. This moral selving has reflected the conscious, active self-forming acting upon the existing dispositions and reproducing those structural elements.

Parents also help in the accumulation of moral credits through practising moral actions on behalf of their children. In Chinese culture, it is believed that people doing good deeds on behalf of someone could help accumulate merits for that person and thus the quality. As the parents believed that ‘a good example is the best sermon’, they set themselves as the role model to spread the core values of doing good hoping to help the inculcation of such values by their children at an earlier age on top of adding *suzhi* to their bodies. For example, Hestia believed that her habit of volunteering and making donation originates from her mother. She said,

*my mum is a very traditional and serious Buddhist, when we were small, she sometimes would ask if she could use our red packet money as coffin contribution to those low-income families, as a donation to Tzu Chi Foundation to help families in need of this service... As I grow up, I got to know some scandals of dishonest practices of this organisation, but my mum would say it's a religious organisation so that I shouldn't criticise a religion. I think the concept or value my mum taught me is that even though we are not very well-off, if we donate TWD500, and some other families donate TWD500 each, then the donations will accumulate into a huge sum to help others. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

Although her moral agency allowed her to be sceptical of the ethics of Tzu Chi Foundation, she supported the idea of helping others as long as she could afford it and believed that many a mickle makes a muckle. And that mickle counts toward her personal quality, or *suzhi*, as these have been internalised as dispositions so that such act becomes ordinary. Her mother's strategy of developing Hestia's quality has successfully shaped her as a person with the dispositions to generate more possibilities of action and practice on the basis of a good person.

It is also the case that parents volunteer together with their children so that the transmission of values through moral exemplarity would become more direct albeit unspoken. Dawn volunteered the first time in high school when her mother invited her to help at a donation event after the Sichuan earthquake. When she was worried about not being too helpful as a high school student, her mother explained, ‘everyone could help in any forms or manners’. York has also engaged his children in volunteering by making it an ordinary family activity, part of their everyday life. When her children were small and urban greening was promoted to enhance ecological health in Nankan, a district in Taoyuan City in Taiwan, he went for tree planting service with them. According to him, his elder daughter has developed an interest in volunteering since small and has recently been to Cambodia for service. By engaging the children in the practices of helping others rather than only telling them what is good and right to do, the transmission of moral values is more direct. Normalising the practice of helping others as a part of the family activity, part of the daily life, facilitates the unconscious inculcation of habitus. At the same time, these are active strategies of creating the moral self through the continued practices

of doing good. This work of self-forming has helped to commit the children to certain ends – to become a virtuous person who bears the quality of acting morally.

Although parents' way of practising good may be challenged by their children who have acquired another layer of dispositions into the habitus outside home, the values of moral selving are compatible and internalised for developing a person with good qualities. This depends on how the children's patterns of thought are challenged or how they respond and negotiate, such as Hestia modifying the way of practising good, and Dawn and York's daughter elaborating the practices in a global context.

Personal development or cultivation of a virtuous person embodies the value of long-term orientation. Accumulation of *suzhi* relies on practices through which values are added to the body as surplus. Learning is one of the ways to cultivate quality and one of the lifelong goals in traditional Chinese values. In order to add value into the body, individuals should aim at enrichment through the process of learning and the lifelong benefit from the skills and quality rather than the symbolic ones such as certificates of qualification. For instance, Kathleen's parents believed that having a professional degree was not sufficient although it would get her prepared and secured with a stable job; rather, experiencing challenges or ups and downs would make her 'become more resilient which is a sort of a protective factor or soft skill in the long run' (Interview, 25/1/2017). This value lies in the long-term orientation of the Chinese culture that quality accumulation is more valuable than immediate, tangible returns from taking an action. This emerged in one of the conversations between Jasmine and her father. She said,

*my father always volunteers, I didn't hear much about it from him when I was small, but quite often recently, not sure why... one summer I was planning to do an internship, he instead asked me to volunteer. I said I won't get paid, then he scolded me, saying that I could not see or compare things like that. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

Besides setting up a role model, Jasmine's father volunteered and invited her to volunteer together in order to show her how to be a good person. The above conversation implies a different definition of a good person that comes to challenge the mode of thought which have been inculcated and accumulated. Undeniably, the internship experience was beneficial to Jasmine in learning outside the university. Comparatively, the experience of volunteering is however more favourable to the cultivation of the person from the kind of capital produced and accumulated. Rather than the materialistic or monetary terms, moral selving or self-cultivation through volunteering is linked to benevolence, in relations to others, and the return is on the quality or capital accumulation in the individual. Instead of conceiving doing internship for career development, volunteering has become available as an appropriate choice of being a good person with a long-term orientation. It is also

because volunteering involves taking up more roles and obligations in society, which helps the development of *ren*, the source of all virtues of a person. Dawn elaborated how her mother explained to her the importance of making contribution to society. She said,

*she thought that if young people do voluntary service without any remunerations, as long as it is not bad things, that's a contribution or good thing to the society. I had this impression that when I was in middle school or about that time, my mother told me that she did not care about what my occupation would be in the future, but it's something, not particularly volunteering, something that can help others, some sort of help for this society. It's quite a huge influence as I can observe in my daily life that in terms of money, materials, or actual participation, she was very influential to me that if I have the ability, I can do some little things, even though it is not something significant, as I think each part or segment of the society would need a screw, so I think as long as I have the ability and I do some little things, it's a good thing. (Interview, 26/2/2017)*

It is a good thing as it is a process of self-forming, a moral action with the aim of establishing a moral conduct that commits her to the way of being an ethical subject. This is the technique or method to enable the transformation of these practices of the self into certain mode of being. This form of technology of the self encouraged by her mother has led to the development of Dawn with the attitude, the dispositions to act morally. This practical rationality has informed practical actions in other circumstances and also provided reflexive powers to reason about her virtues in the self-formation process. In Dawn's example, volunteering and her mother's influence have helped instil values of making contribution to society into the habitus, which acts as the frame of reference in her daily life, having herself being a better person as the outcome along the self-formation process. The technology of adding quality and the added quality to an individual is actualised and consciously known through direct and explicit interactions in Dawn's case; however, it could be tacit, unconscious influence. When talking about the influence of her parents on her participation in volunteering, Wendy was not aware of it or did not want to admit it until different narratives were linked up. She said,

*we are very traditional Confucian family, when I was small, my dad told me that he wanted me to become a person like Confucius, those kinds of people whose influences are still existing after 2000 years. He said ... can you use your actions or knowledge to influence others? That's something will remain in this world, still be alive, just like Confucius. I was like, rolling my eyes. He used to have such expectations on me, to have some sort of influences. He does this from time to time, as he likes reading books about philosophy, and likes talking about principles and values, and I listen on the side. (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

Although she did not entirely agree with what her father said, through listening and seeing at home, the dispositions had become unconsciously inculcated and accumulated. She interpreted and practiced in her own way of being a good person making some sort of contribution. Non-reflexively informed, volunteering was her way of expanding influences, and she has gradually become a person who can create some influences.

*It's a value, in my mind, maybe it influenced me to make the decision [of volunteering], but I don't have much consciousness... but my dad's influence on me is quite great, it's like something implanted in my mind without self-consciousness, I need to think how to expand my influences, so I did volunteering, he's quite successful although I don't want to admit that, I will reply, 'really? No, no'. When he tries to share with me his thoughts on life, I am like 'okay, fine, no need to say that much, I got it, understand'. Sometimes, if I accept I really listen, I think, right, I would think how I can do it if I agree and want to do it. (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

Setting up moral exemplars has been effective in displaying the definition of a good self and ways of creating a better self. Values are inculcated as dispositions which guide the practices tacitly but strongly. Comparatively, the moral exemplarity in schools has been more explicit and active.

#### 4.4.2 Identifying role model in school

Identifying moral exemplars in school is the practice of explicit consuming and displaying moral capital, which in turn may be effective in instilling or internalising the moral values through observations. On top of creating the culture and spreading the value of volunteering as the ethical thing-to-do, the encouragement in school helps ascribing an exemplar status to some students who are enthusiastically participating in volunteering. For instance, Ilsa has been regarded as the 'kind of person doing it' after she was asked to do a sharing in school. After a visit to a charity organisation when she was in secondary school, Ilsa had a lot of questions and reflections and thus signed up as a volunteer for that organisation in order to know more about the issues she was concerned about, such as poverty and human trafficking. As her teacher noticed her interest and also reflections, she was given the chance to speak in the school assembly to share her experiences. As her talk was well-received, her peers started to position her as the right person to ask whenever opportunities came up, while she also started to develop a felt responsibility of volunteering. She said,

*people thought I did it very well, so I was positioned as doing something like that. Since then, people would ask me to help as they thought it's my 'field'. From time to time, people were talking about it, then I thought that's what I have been doing. So, when I saw the promotion of the trip last year, I felt like it's my stuff, I should do, had some sense of mission, after being confined to this image, not sure if it's good or bad, but with this image, I would keep doing towards that direction. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

This, on the one hand, is the strategy in school to organise visits to charity organisations hoping to promote the idea of volunteering and through which instil some moral values on students. Ilsa was one of those who came back with the outcome that the school teachers wanted to see; the kind of individuals or role models produced along the way when such strategies were implemented was then consumed and displayed to further encourage students to take up more responsibilities and become a better person. Her story acted as a successful example of bridging between doing something good and becoming someone better, forming a role model to



be learnt from (Matsuba & Walker, 2005). On the other hand, this exemplarity created the sense of mission which, to a certain extent, helped sustain the practice of volunteering in the long-term as the way to maintain the quality of the status as a role model. It had reinforced the habitus of the role model and thus volunteering had been rationalised as the appropriate choice. It then formed the correlation that it became the sort of things they should do as they fell into the category of moral subjects or moral exemplars. Therefore, when she saw the promotional poster, she felt she should do it as an expression of her second nature.

Such strategy of identifying and displaying moral exemplars is also evident in Taiwan's vision in education. Part of the Youth Development Affairs' vision is to 'empower volunteer service competence; promote diverse youth volunteer service, subsidize youth for forming teams to organize all kinds of services; organize national competitions for excellent youth volunteer teams and conduct awards ceremonies to reward model volunteers' (Ministry of Education, 2017). In order to identify and reward model volunteers, schools have set up point award system or award ceremonies to encourage students to participate in volunteering and earn points for service hours. For example, Hestia shared that when she was in university, they had a ranking among the cohort for their accumulated service hours and the top three would receive an award. She explained with more details, saying

*before university, I did not know there was a mechanism for accumulating voluntary hours. Our faculty's graduation requirement was 100 hours, other faculties only required 24 hours. At first, 100 hours sounded a lot to me, but I graduated with 1200 hours. We had 2 classes, but 1200 hours was just the 4<sup>th</sup> in our class. I was not sure about the highest number, but at that time we could apply for a service award based on the number of service hours, I was not on the top 3. But I also joined student societies on top of doing service; although the hours spent for organising events were not counted, I was given the award. Someone said it's weird if I did not get the award with 1200 hours. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

When the practice of doing good is graded or even submitted into a competition, it becomes an act of signalling, although it may not be the intention of the volunteers. Setting up role models was aimed to strengthen youth volunteer participation and development. However, it resulted in a focus lying on the number of hours and award. In this sense, it means that quality can be quantified. The exemplarity may help sustain the practice of doing good, which may also be because of the felt responsibility. In this example, it does not seem to help internalise the moral values through the role models; it may then be reduced to an exercise of fulfilling the graduation requirement. It could be seen as a strategy used in school to add quality to the students not only responsible for wider social issues but also more governable in school. Having said that, we could not deny the possibility or potential of such mechanism in creating the atmosphere of doing good and volunteering as the appropriate choice and subsequently instrumentalised moral subjects, as Ilsa and Hestia, for example, have been long-term volunteers.

## 4.5 Enacting the good self through religiosity

Although religion is not a theme that came up frequently with my informants, it has played a role of some significance in shaping the habitus of the participants. Religion in this section is not about the doctrines of different religions, it is rather about how religiosity exists as another layer of dispositions in the individuals' habitus in the field of religion. Bourdieu (1996) defines field as 'an objectively defined position defined by its objective relationship with other positions' (p. 231; as cited in Grusendorf, 2016). It is set by boundaries, by rules of the game which refer to a set of objective regularities followed by everyone who enters the game (Lamaison, 1986). In a field dominated by Confucianism, a religious plurality is embraced resulting in a common moral field through which the 'good self' is constantly produced, mediated, and enacted.

Religiosity effects changes on the habitus through socialisation. Values from religion are inculcated as what they believe on top of existing habitus. Faith enables people to get involved in their religion with devotion and tend to follow what has been circulated around as a good thing to do. For example, being part of the church, volunteering is 'something people do together' (*Daphane, Interview, 25/1/2017*), it has become an unquestioned activity. Kathleen also explained that activities organised by the church are choices of doing good. As many friends from the same religion background have done similar service activities, she has come to believe that it is a good thing to do, and she has also joined those activities from time to time. People from the church have acted as the role model displaying the quality of a good person in their religion. Kathleen had a felt responsibility to become a better person and thus she went on an exchange trip to Poland with international Catholic teenagers in order to explore the roles and responsibilities of other Catholics and then reflect on what she had done. She said,

*I knew some people would take up roles to serve within each group, but I didn't do enough as a Catholic. Maybe I focused on how to do better so I join dance team, many things because of self-improvement, but I wanted to do more for the community. (Interview, 25/1/2017)*

This is an interesting line of guilt. From the trip, she was trying to identify the role models as a Catholic and adopt those practices to become an 'up-to-standard' Catholic. According to what she thought, being a good self is no longer enough. Moral serving or care for the self does not sound as acceptable as doing something for society, similarly to what Foucault commented on (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987). Therefore, her self-evaluation urged her to develop a more virtuous self in order to fit in the values of her religious group. The way of cultivating the good self through taking up more roles and responsibilities echoes that of developing *ren* towards the forming of *junzi* in Confucian values. Other than identifying God as the moral reference, *junzi* is the moral exemplar formed to represent the self-betterment and betterment of the society. On the other hand, Quinn saw this sense of responsibility as the responsibility for oneself in response to the creation by God of

the religion. Being a Christian, he has been going to church regularly since he was small, thus adopting the value in his religion that 'having my life shouldn't be taken for granted, if God gave me my life but I don't take it serious, I am not responsible for God who created me, neither for myself who got this chance of living' (Interview, 26/1/2017). In order to be responsible for God, he is adopting a serious attitude towards his life through learning new things and experiencing different ways of living, and doing service is one of those ways to give himself new experiences. This form of religiosity has formed a bridge between producing a good self and doing good.

However, beyond her church, Kathleen found her actions no longer produced the same desired outcomes or people did not act the same as she used to in her religious group. She explained,

*my religion has given me many ethical standards, since I was small, people I have known, the environment in which I grew up, were all beautiful, like no vulgar, everybody was lining up, disciplined and so on. Since being a teen, that was a transitional period, having more contact with people in society, then I started to think why people were behaving in those ways, for example, maybe... don't say those such as 'love others as you love yourself' which is too intrinsic, say behavioural, very basic ones like punctuality and filial piety, although now I am not always punctual, I used to be very punctual... those basic ethics, no robbery, loyalty etc... When I have had more contact with this society, I realise those are not the same as how I knew. When I see red light, I wonder if I am really not allowed to cross the road, or when you speak a bit more loudly people would think you are not considerate. I have become more flexible, I won't think those behaviours are exactly wrong, but I won't do it. I understand those people do that because of their background, stories behind. (Interview, 25/1/2017)*

When her mode of thought was challenged with ethics in other circumstances, the inculcated dispositions from her religion did not guide her to act in a certain way or to interpret what others do. If a pattern of thought emerged through the negotiation between values, the definition of a good self would then be modified. As in the case of Kathleen, when she encountered the self-questioning moments, the habitus operated at a conscious level which produced new facets of the self (Reay, 2004). The consciousness and reflexivity reflected other structural elements, through which the encounter and adaptation were fed back to the habitus as another layer. This was then reproduced in new ways of seeing and doing things, 'less definite now, but more critical' as she said.

Differences in displaying values across religions are highlighted. The informants pointed out that although different religions advocate similar values such as benevolence and love, those values are expressed and performed differently. As a Buddhist, Ilsa explained that the ethics are more practical, and her religion puts more emphasises on everyday practices than on talking about their values or principles. When she compared Buddhism with Christianity, she associated Christianity with explicit displays of principles. Therefore, when

she further elucidated, her mother, as a Buddhist too, always showed her that they should do good things and help others in their daily life. This, she believed, was partly guided by their religion, since practice is more emphasised than preaching. She said,

*I think Buddhists and Christians are different in the way that Christians would constantly display their religion, like when we went to Debby's school [a religious school built and run by a Hongkongese missionary in Phnom Penh], from what they put up or she said, you could see something like 'God would bless you', but you would seldom hear Buddhists talking about Buddha, so we won't always display our religion, only if you are in the context doing the practices, maybe worshipping in a temple, so would you see the display. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

Informants from Christian and Buddhist backgrounds all mentioned the influence of their religion. Their religiosity informs their actions through inculcated dispositions; but they also acknowledged the different definitions of being a good self beyond their religion. Kathleen commented,

*we have a principle that you should love others as you love yourself, supposedly the ideal world is everyone is like brother and sister. Of course, it's not like that. We do say that, but in practice, you can't impose it on others... My religion tells me that we can't be money-oriented, love and affection are the priority, everyone is equal, and help the weaker ones. But I'm not like saying that's Jesus' love when doing service, it's more like being influenced since I was small. So, I think offering help or helping others when they are in need is right to do, a proper way and acceptable to others... I remember when I was studying about the Confucius, I found some principles that sound similar to those I learnt in my religion, then I agreed. (Interview, 25/1/2017)*

When their moral values from religion come in line with the traditional values of Confucianism, the values are reinforcing each other. They are reinforced in the sense that religious values are foundational references of ethics as they have been internalised and ingrained, and then traditional Confucian values are loosely followed if they are congruent with the religious values although Confucianism is the rule of the game in this field. In contrast to formal religions, Confucianism, which has been the dominant philosophical teaching in Chinese societies in East Asia for thousands of years, however, was not consciously aware of or explicitly talked about by the volunteers. This could be because Confucianism is part and parcel of the everyday life in the form of implicit way of living. It is not talked and celebrated as a religion. It embodies the civilised and cultured patterns of behaviour (Bell, 2017), through which good character of people can be cultivated to become *junzi*. The idea of 'good self' developed through different modes of religiosity is mediated through the Confucian ethical framework. Such religious plurality has produced the common moral field in which volunteering is conceived as the appropriate thing to do to enact the good self.

#### 4.6 Crafting a class of moral subjects in the complex ethical terrain

By using Bourdieu's concept of habitus and Foucault's idea of technologies of the self, together with the *suzhi* discourse, I have explored the weaving of unconscious dispositions and conscious deliberations in forming the rationalities of participation in volunteer tourism within the frames of good qualities. We shall ask the question again: what are the promotional materials speaking to?

One prominent dimension of the moral landscape is the notion of service. The introduction of service obligation and promotion of global citizenship have appeared as strong and active mobilising strategies in responsabilising the individuals to reach out to care about global issues and care for distant others. These strategies have conveyed the values in guiding the individuals in thinking about what kind of a person they want to become, as well as the device of inculcating moral values and working up the moral individuals. Especially the compulsory service requirement in schools, a culture of volunteering has been developed, resulting in a felt responsibility and conditioned response to call for ethical actions.

This then comes to challenge what has been inculcated through family education in volunteers' earlier years. The definition of a good self differs between generations, resulting in tensions in conceiving the ethics of helping others and volunteer tourism as the appropriate choice. The generational tensions lie in the clashes between family duty and ethical imperatives to help others, and further the different perception of care at the local and the global level, due to the particularistic ethics of care and changing material conditions. The encounter of dispositions inculcated from school and from family could challenge the existing mode of thought, or negotiate and add another layer of disposition to the habitus to form a new pattern of thought. This leads to the differentiation between old ethics and new ethics of which the latter one embodies the negotiated ethical framework of traditional Confucian values and global citizenship. Those promotional materials are thus speaking to this particular new ethics of the young generation in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Beyond the instrumentalised service obligations and felt responsibility to help the distant others, the sense of moral exemplar is important and distinctive in recognising and emphasising quality of an individual. The values circulating are to define a good or virtuous person, reasonable and acceptable choices and practice in the everyday context. A role model or moral subject is identified more actively and explicitly to represent and display the good practices, and to produce and accumulate moral capital on the individuals. In school, moral subjects are identified to create a sense of mission; in family, a role model is set up by parents, and a symbolic *junzi* is recognised to diffuse and produce the quality or character to be consumed and reproduced in a more tacit way; religiosity also supports the self-forming through identifying moral exemplars. This helps

exhibiting qualities of a good person which in turn reinforcing their dispositions that conduct oneself to improve and transform into an ethical subject. Sending organisations further appeal to the need to seek a way of developing the good self, or *ren* as disseminated and demonstrated through moral exemplars.

At the moment, we have shown that what is emerging is the interplay of the service obligation, increased wealth and thus possibility of extending care, cultivation of *ren* and other Confucian values, and religiosity. Responding to Butcher (2014) has commented on the link between personal qualities and social outcomes through the rise of ethical and responsible tourism, specifically volunteer tourism, this chapter has unravelled the social attributes or cultural setting in which these personal qualities are made sense of or defined. All these have reflected how the structures of the social world are incorporated in the body of an individual in certain ways that structure how the individual acts, at the same time producing a notion of quality as a form of moral self. Instead of reflecting the habitus of a class, it is about the attempts and outcome of crafting a class of instrumentalised moral subjects. The moral self in this class is not a simply responsible, rational, autonomous neoliberal subject with choices; the moral subject aims to become a good person, a better self through the instrumentalised strategies interacting with Chinese values. This is slightly different from the Western responsibilisation in the way that in the East Asian context, self-development or becoming a better self is the choice, and the outcome of the choice is not being ethical. This has shown a Chinese form of technologies of the self. Thus, it is not about the choice of doing good or doing bad, or even doing nothing. This chapter has shown the limit of the current responsibilisation work and alternative tourism or ethical tourism literature that tend to posit individuals making discrete choices without looking at the overarching, complex ethical terrain in which individuals choose to do things from a particular instilled position. When sending organisations prompt to the need to develop a virtuous self and the felt responsibility from a conjuncture created by service learning initiatives and new ethics of care and responsibility due to increased wealth, the discourses of sending organisations become so appealing that volunteer tourism thrives as the appropriate choice particularly when it has emerged as a moralised, alternative form of travel.

## **Chapter 5 Grounding Morality: Being in, with, alongside**

In this chapter, I set out to explore the practices of volunteer tourists who in seeking a sense of moral fulfilment through taking part in volunteer tourism. I also discuss the kinds of relationship that foster certain kinds of interactions to fill a perceived moral vacuum. Taylor (1991) has suggested that disenchantment of the world and loss of community are caused by individualism and alienation while Arai and Pedlar (2003) have seen moral loss and social crisis of alienation as emerging social problems. I propose in this chapter that moral communities are constructed by the participants through their practices of doing belonging and in so doing making themselves accepted for moral fulfilment. At the same time, these moral communities act as liminal spaces where moral codes may be suspended thus allowing the doing of that which has been otherwise restrained in ordinary life. These moral communities appear as some other moral worlds at temporal spaces or different timescales. Being positioned as a form of responsible tourism or moral conduct is assumed from volunteer tourists, while morality is grounded in practices, this chapter attempts to explore what ordinary ethics is situated in practices for moral fulfilment in these moral communities.

It is pointed out that many people engaged in post-place communities are better networked than those in traditional place-based communities, which would mean the 'moral vacuum' is less about a lack of community than a lack of interaction (Bradshaw, 2008). This then leads us back to the debates and criticisms on neoliberalism and the type of individuals produced. In the case of volunteer tourism, I seek to explore how the desire for community is embodied through the formation of temporary community of volunteer tourists and what kinds of relationships arise that facilitates the evolution of such community.

Among other concerns, distance is an interesting dimension of these temporary communities of volunteer tourists and resulted relationships. Distance has been an important theme in discussions and debates in the geographies of care. With the rise of responsible or sustainable forms of tourism, care for the distant others can be embodied through choosing this alternative type of tourism or ethical encounter with locals. This tourism space allows the enactment of care in-situ at reduced distance. With regard to distance in maintaining relationship, Ginzburg (1994) has pointed out that since Aristotle it has been recognised that the intensity of sentiments may be reduced with increasing distance from the objects, while Davies and Herbert (1993) have observed that relationships can be maintained over greater distance with the support of the global sense of

place. This probes us to explore the importance of distance with regards to maintaining the temporary moral community and caring relationships. This chapter then aims to discuss how ethics of care, responsibility and obligation are enacted in a liminal tourism space by looking at spatiality and temporality of different 'we' relations. This then helps us to understand how the moral self is cultivated and experienced in relation to others. In the following, I am going to discuss three forms of moral communities which I have identified – moral community among volunteer tourists, moral community of like-minded people, and moral community with the locals. As of nature of relationship, I borrow Heidegger's terms – 'being-with', 'being-alongside' and 'being-in' – to understand the modes of being enacted by volunteers in these moral communities.

To Heidegger (1953), 'Being-with' (*Mitsein*) is an essential part of 'Being-in-the-world' (*Dasein*), as he explains, 'Being-with is such that the disclosedness of the Dasein-with of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein's Being is Being-with, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others' (p. 160). 'Being-with' emphasises relationality as Heidegger (1953) suggests, being is always relational and shared. Attention to being-with brings back into play how human existence is always about being in relation with something. He stresses that engaged being-with is always already 'being with others'. 'Others' do not mean everyone else but me. In his view, individual *Dasein* (a human being is not reducible to a subject) is not considered first as a given and then used to construct its relationship with the surrounding world, but is defined through its relation to others, to things, and to oneself. I borrow this term to refer to the mode of being engaged with others and intimate relationships, especially when moral codes are suspended.

As of 'being-alongside', Heidegger (1953) posits that two 'things' cannot 'touch' at all because there is always a minute space between two 'things', even though that space is perceived of as nothing. When talking about two entities, this 'touch' connotes human closeness. The state of 'being-alongside' also stresses partial connection that involves attachment and detachment (Latimer, 2013). Thus, 'being-alongside' is used to understand the relationship created from working together that involves responsibility in a collective setting, collectivity.

'Being-in' is usually associated with involvement in a context or situation. On top of 'inness', 'being-in' can be also used as a way to describe patterns of existence (Heidegger, 1953). Here, I borrow this term not only to refer to a spatial relation, but also the state of feeling and doing belonging. This allows us to understand how the state of 'being-with' and 'being-alongside' help to produce the state of 'being-in', or how actively doing of belonging fosters being into the modes of 'being-with' and 'being-alongside'.



## 5.1 Moral community among volunteers

Belonging to a moral community among volunteers has given them an intense experience of being in human relationships which have been long lost. The coming together of people as a group to volunteer creates a web of relationships which allow the volunteers to feel the sense of collectivity and care. As Arai and Pedlar (2003) has suggested, society is 'a meeting place for individual wills' (p. 195), while Bowring (1997) has argued that the moral fabric of the society has been disintegrating. During my fieldwork, many informants raised similar concerns about the individualistic culture in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The informants elaborated upon concerns such as, how people strive for self-realisation and their own goals at the expenses of others, the fierce competition arising from neoliberal responsibilisation that has further divided the society, resulting in loss in the social cohesion and social crisis. They voiced that people in their everyday life tend to avoid responsibility and commitment for the common good, on the other hand their volunteer companions are very willing to sacrifice and expressed their care and empathy. Given the frustration and disappointment about the lacking sense of interdependence and obligations as well as the loose ties among people in the society, the informants believed that the ethical sense of collectivity helped re-connecting people by actualising the meaning of moral obligation, responsibility and care in various forms and thus moral fulfilment beyond the everyday context, which is essential to maintain the function of the society. Dawn gave a more nuanced account for this notion of community:

*In many times, especially when we start working, we will gradually forget this thing, but what we need is mutual care, caring for others. I think that's something to maintain the function of this society so that it won't turn too terrible. I think it's like a network, I imagine it like a spider web. Each of us represents a node, but we can't survive on our own node, so we have to connect with other nodes to form a line, and lines are woven into networks, I think society should be like this, also think that society is formed in this way, but from time to time, people would forget. Volunteering helps us find back the ability given to people, everybody has this ability. (Interview, 26/2/2017)*

Dawn highlighted the relationality beyond simply being related to others but 'a state of humanness' (Neville, 2008, p. 251). What they were looking for was this sense of interdependence and reciprocated care among people like a spider web. As Bradshaw (2008) suggests, people usually felt compelled to do things collectively in communities in the past. Here, we could see the quest for that collectivity, sense of being-in or belonging to community and recognition from being part of the community, and for the kind of relationships among people that involve interactions and reciprocity. Individuals exist in a community in relation to others and this relation is maintained by broader ethical determinants. Dawn believed this should be the form of our society and we have the ability to maintain such kind of web of relationships. This leads us to think whether this

ability has been erased by the new ethics of living in the current individualistic society. A moral community of volunteers provides the space to regain this lost sense of mutual construction between self and society.

Of this moral community, the formation and evolution are not unidirectional or one-dimensional especially as it is an organised group of travellers rather than simply a collection of individual tourists. When the volunteers joined the two organisations, they had to go through a process of interviewing and screening from which applicants exhibiting certain qualities would be chosen so as to contribute to the accomplishment of the tasks of the project. Many informants believed that people who join service trips mostly share similar beliefs and interest, have a common goal and are willing to give. However, the moral community of volunteers is different from the traditional community created from a homogenous group of people with collective interests and target, or from the kind of communities that do not construct themselves but evolve (Oliver-Smith, 2005). The volunteers did share some interests and goals for joining the trip but were not necessarily having the same beliefs, or even no one was entirely altruistic as maintained by Tomazos and Butler (2010). Rather, the moral community was created by the sending organisations at the application and selection stage and volunteers joined as part of the community to experience moral serving, a process of developing a more virtuous self, or seeking moral fulfilment. Under this pre-condition of being part of a moral community, a certain sense of moral relationship was produced through their experiences of collectivity and the embodied fulfilment from the doing of good.

### 5.1.1 The collective doing of good

Being a member of this moral community, volunteers had to engage in the collective in order to be recognised as part of it. As a member of the group, each one was assumed to share the tasks, as none of them should avoid the responsibility, the responsibility of being part of the group. With this sense of collectivity and responsibility, as observed by me and the team leaders, the volunteers ‘worked at their utmost, no need to allocate’ (Wendy, Interview, 1/3/2017). Volunteers were moving flexibly, appearing at the spots of different tasks instantly and coordinating very efficiently, geared by the assumed responsibility and facilitated by their rapport and synchronisation. Xena gave an example,

*we made the division of labour instantly, very quickly divided into small teams, such as when we were asked to line up for a relay, a line was formed immediately, or when we needed six people for moving the concrete and six people appeared there instantly, or someone went up to help when another one said it's too heavy to move the stuff. (Interview, 21/2/2017)*

The work seems to be simple and straightforward although tough, what is more important here is the group endeavour. As a collective action, each volunteer was one of the points forming the relay line in the sense that

the group were interacting with and helping one another, actualising the willingness to give and work towards the common good which the volunteers wanted to see and experience. Despite the challenges of doing things that they had never done such as construction work, volunteers stressed the importance that each one of them took part in the activities. For example, the Hong Kong Team-A had to help building the footpath along the river by driving the woods into the river bed. Even though they did not manage to finish the construction, at the same time the local team did not expect to have it accomplished on that day, each of them had tried plunging the woods into the mud while the rest were gathering around to give support (Figure 10). Similarly, when building the house and toilet, the Taiwanese Team also got involved in every single step of the process. Even when lifting up the structure of the house, everyone in the group were trying their best to have their hands on it (Figure 11). This embodied the collective action where their participation was one of the values of the action demonstrating how each one of them was part of this community. Through these focal practices, volunteers were engaged in both the means – working collectively, and the ends – the house and the bridge and the collective joy, experiencing the values of cooperation of a community (Borgmann, 1992; as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Selznick, 1992). Undeniably, it was about doing good; but more importantly, it was about the common good as a result of the group endeavour with meaning to them (Etzioni, 1995).



*Figure 10 Everyone trying to plunge the woods into the mud while the rest were gathering around to give/show support*



Figure 11 Everyone having their hands on the structure of the house at the moment of lifting it up

Attempts to show their presence in the team work was equally important if they could not participate physically. Two volunteers, Adam and Quinn, from Hong Kong received different treatment by their respective team members after they injured their legs. From the very beginning, Adam was treated as an outsider because the group did not see enough participation and commitment from him in both work and household tasks. On the first two days in the village, after collecting mangrove seeds in the morning, volunteers were scheduled to work in the seedling nursery site in the afternoon. The work included getting mud from the river, mixing and filling the pots with the mud, and sorting the pots with seeds collected into the nursery site. Most team members commented about Adam that he was hesitant to get his hands and feet into the mud to help while the rest of the team and local people were doing the seedling nursery towards the common target of the voluntary work. Charlotte was one of them, saying,

*if you joined a service trip, you should have expected the worst, expected that the environment was not that pleasant. We were there to plant mangrove, in the sea and river, I thought these should have been expected, but he had not. (Interview, 19/1/2017)*

Adam should have expected such working environment. Moreover, he should have expected group endeavour and cooperation towards the common goal that constituted meaning to the whole group, as this was the solidarity and norm of this moral community that maintained the practical connection among volunteers at the early time of the trip. Meanwhile, Adam did not deny this hesitation. He got several cuts on his legs same as other volunteers did when collecting mangrove seeds on the first trip to the sea. Partly warned by Ethan, Adam was afraid of getting infection from working in the mud as he saw unclean water coming from the river

and dish-washing water discharged from the kitchen. After 'I sensibly analysed and thought he's [Ethan's] right' (*Interview, 24/1/2017*), he said, he was sitting in the reading corner doing nothing as he did not dare to go down to the mud. This shows the struggle between sacrifice as part of the team and sensibility of not getting infection, at the same time the guilt of not doing it or not doing enough for the belonging and group recognition as he said he regretted afterwards.

Similarly, Quinn injured his foot from riding a motorbike on the third day in the village. Although his wound could not be in contact with water and restricted him to move very flexibly, he was trying to take part and help by mixing the concrete when the store room was being built. Instead of blaming him for injuring himself and not being able to work, his team members did not allow him to go into the construction site to work, and asked him to 'go out to sit, don't move'. Despite this, he was trying to help out by passing water bottles to them regularly at the construction site, and doing a few bricks of the wall of the store room. The difference in treatment by their team members explains the importance of efforts to show that they took part in collective action and did what was expected from the volunteers as a group after they decided to go on the service trip and got accepted to this community.

Adam's behaviour was seen different because everyone in the team got cuts on their hands and legs, but he was the only one caring about infection, not participating in the subsequent tasks, or not even staying around the site of work to help from above on the footbridge like two other volunteers did. Here, it is not the struggle between sacrifice and sensibility; it is rather the ethics of being-alongside and attempts to follow the norms so as to be accepted as part of the community. On the contrary, Quinn maintained his part in the team to show shared sense of responsibility. He showed his presence and involvement, living up to the assumed qualities of this community. Besides, what Charlotte said was not just about the harsh conditions but also participation and integration of the volunteers in accomplishing the collective responsibility. Adam felt regretted and frustrated because he was absent from the experience, as what constructed the experience and inscribed the memory of his participation was physically being there to feel through climbing up the trees to collect mangrove seeds and working in the mud to do the seedling nursery. The footsteps on the mud embodied his presence and work he did together with the group, and these marks on the mud should be left at the same time as a group. Nevertheless, he was not doing the same as others at the same tempo and rhythm, through which his experience of moral serving was not embodied. On the other hand, even though Quinn was mainly assisting in mixing the concrete and later on looking after others, his efforts were embodied through the concrete he mixed and those bricks he put on in building the house as an outcome of the collectivity. Adam and Quinn

demonstrated different levels of attachment to (or detachment from) the collective action and the team. This then determined the intensity of their being-alongside and belongingness to or recognition from the group.

This coequality is determined and shaped by how ordinary ethics is played out in this moral setting. Going on service trip is usually associated with harsh environment and tough ways of living with a lot of challenges which are not much experienced in volunteers' home country. Being in the group, volunteers should have the expectations of living in the local way, or the reasonable way of living up to this membership. For instance, Amelie said,

*I am quite picky in Taiwan, but when I am in another place, I just accept how it is, like in Qinghai we peed in the nature, there was no toilet, what can you do, still care about cleanliness? Everyone was doing it. In Cambodia, roads and streets are sandy, sand goes into shoes, then just clean my feet at night, just get dirty, I am fine with how it is, that's their culture, that's Cambodia. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Everyone was doing it. Doing it did not only show that they were doing the right thing in that setting, it also meant that they followed the values or norms of the group which made them feel integrated. Ethics is grounded in the agreement and norms rather than rules and regularities of the team as well as the practice rather than belief (Lambek, 2010a). Feeling disintegrated could be as harsh as the living conditions there. This is because both taking up challenges and self-fulfilment were their purposes of going on the service trip; the former bears the transformative potential which will be discussed in the next chapter while the latter can be achieved through being part of this moral community. Because of this ethics of being-alongside and being-in, volunteers were committed to the work without any complaints about the tough work and harsh conditions such as the high temperature or they internalised any struggles if any. For instance, Felicia found the heat unbearable at some point when they were building the house but at the same time, she thought shifting to the shade was less appropriate. She shared,

*people never complained, although it was so hot, building the house in the sun, seems I never heard of anyone complaining, only me complaining secretly... about the hot weather, why couldn't we go to the shades? Once when we were cutting the bamboo sticks, there was a shade next to us, but nobody moved to the shade. I actually wanted to move under the shade, but since nobody moved so I did not dare to do so. It was very hot, the first day of building the house. At that time, I was wondering why they did not ask us to stay in the shade, I was thinking to myself, but seems nobody had noticed that shade, so I just forgot about it, but it was very hot. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

Understandably, staying in the shade or avoiding going into river with injured legs were both visceral. Fairly, even if Felicia had worked under the shade, the house would still have been built eventually. Also, from time to time team leaders and volunteers had reminded one another to drink enough water and put on sunscreen to prevent heatstroke. Ironically, only moving to the shade did not seem to be appropriate, not in this place but



this social context in which the meaning of moral obligation was actualised. However, in such context, volunteers were expected to be toughened up, to do what the team did, and thus these practices were not deemed too reasonable, or they avoided being judged as deviant from doing so. Although doing good was not incidental, the fulfilment came from feeling integrated or accepted into the community, being in the relationship, so that the task was accomplished by the group as a whole. Therefore, no matter how hot it was, Felicia decided to stay in the sun as everybody did. Despite the fact that she wanted to take up more challenges than she used to do in her daily life, staying in the sun was not her intention or expectation to achieve this. However, as the group was divided into small teams, they had their particular spots of doing the task which altogether assembled to have the house built (Figure 12). This means they had to fulfil the obligation at their spot, so this relationship was ethical in the sense that it was not simply being related to others. In this setting, it was less about self-interest and entitlement for freedom, it was more about doing belonging actively through mutuality and cooperation so as to be recognised as part of the group.



*Figure 12 Volunteers were divided into small teams working at their particular spots*

### 5.1.2 Instrumentalising the collectivity

Oliver-Smith (2005) states that communities do not construct themselves but evolve. In the volunteer tourism space, the moral community was constructed with interventions by the sending organisations at different stages and built upon by the volunteer tourists. Arrangements by the sending organisations helped this moral fulfilment through instrumentalising a sense of collectivity and mutuality. Besides building the community

before the trip for the volunteers to belong to, the organisations also played a role in team building by setting the stage.

Kitchen was a significant setting fostering the intensity of being-alongside and being-in among the Hong Kong group. For the Hong Kong Team-A, social interactions that happened in the kitchen were conducive to strengthening the sense of community. Coincidentally, each sub-team consisted of one volunteer who was good at cooking and three others inexperienced. As most of them wanted to learn, the time spent in the kitchen was more of having a cooking class than accomplishing an assigned task. Although the group was divided into small work teams, people from other teams gathered in front of the stove for the cooking class, or just helped passing plates and carrying the dishes to the dining area. This formed an assembly line to serve the meals altogether. Preparing ingredients and washing up dishes were also intimate times when four or five people sat around, cutting, washing or rinsing up. That was the time when they asked each other more personal questions, discussed issues, sought advice on which modules to take, or made fun of one another. In the dining area, interestingly, after several days of sitting on the floor for dinner in small groups, all volunteers shifted to eat at the large dining table. Because of these settings, more unorganised social interactions happened beyond voluntary work, fostering this community to further develop beyond sending organisations' intervention. The spatiality of relationships was important in the sense that 'moral capacity is fostered, cultivated, and exercised within the social environment of the small-scale setting – or it is not acquired at all ... what is fostered here, in the setting of proximity, is the capacity for developing empathy with others' (Vetlesen, 1993, p. 382; as cited in Smith, 1999). In these micro-spaces, distance was reduced, both physical distance by proximity and moral distance by empathy. At the same time, moral codes were suspended in this temporal space, allowing the volunteers to act ordinarily such as sitting on the floor full of vegetables and also ants or bare foot being splashed with soapy water and to open themselves up (this will be discussed in detail in the next section). Although the setting was constructed by the sending organisation, the volunteers built upon and up the importance of this space. Morality was then grounded through and in practices of collective responsibility, so more intimate interactions and more 'we' relations with increasing intensity were formed, making caring and responsibility to follow more naturally (Haste, 1996).

The sending organisations also helped to engineer contexts for speeding up the team building process in order to enhance intensity of experience which in turn facilitated the group work. It was not only to keep the volunteers in the same group but also enable them to experience the trust and intimacy. In social contexts in which people feel engaged with and connected to other people, they are experiencing responsibility and caring/being cared which then become explicit and normative (Haste, 1996). Not only was the social setting



important, so were the place and people. In the beginning, team building took place in bedrooms as Hong Kong Team-A were assigned to bedrooms of four. Chatting before going to sleep in their respective bedroom helped to enhance the familiarity and further develop intimacy among small groups of volunteers. These small groups were then connected when they shared jokes at the dining area or collated back to the large group for the volunteering work. The increasing connection and rapport developed benefitted the cooperation for the collective responsibility, making the working environment more harmonious and the group more cohesive. However, Ethan, one of the project coordinators, was not satisfied with the rhythm of team building as he saw the gaps in the group cohesion, therefore he created the space for fostering the relationship development. He said,

*probably because we were divided into several rooms, we couldn't gather all the time like how we did last year, the team building process was much slower, it's almost until the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> day ... I gathered everybody in my room in the evening, people slept in the same room. The next morning someone said she got kicked, and another one said she got allergy. Afterwards, it's much more improved, Adam didn't get too much verbal attack, we pushed him a bit more, chatting more with him, so the team building was getting better. It's better to stay together in a room, even if we didn't talk, it's still good to gather together and things would happen naturally. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

As he said, even if they did not talk, staying in the same room already created a social setting of mutuality. Everyone felt comfortable with one another's presence in the same bedroom, and the web of relationships became more complex but solid. This intimate temporary space allowed them to experience everything together, even the silence, the idle time in the bedroom. Ethan wanted to speed up the team building because of his previous experience of being in the group produced from staying together in one bedroom, a sustainable relationship. Through this engineering of team building, people were able to find a conformable mode of being and to open up. Therefore, creating ways of being-alongside helped to fill up the gaps and thus the community was further constructed by the volunteers with growing intensity and intimacy. This somehow facilitated understanding and the relations with others which further produced the strong sense of being-with, *communitas* (further discussed in the next section).

In contrast, the Taiwanese group lacked similar settings for the team building. On the one hand, it was because of the itinerary due to which activities took place in scattered locations of the city, on the other hand it was due to the registration offer of TWD500 discount (about £12) for three people joining together. With the promotional offer, people joined the team as a group of friends. The established friendship had formed some small circles which posed some challenges to cohesion of the volunteer group. For example, a Taiwanese volunteer (informant's identity omitted here to avoid estrangement) said the other few undergraduate participants were always staying together, 'they had their own world'. In addition, I could also see Erica and

Felicia often sticking together and talking mainly to each other. These small units did not interact intensively as a whole, creating resistance to the cohesion. Therefore, the team building was not as successful as that of the Hong Kong teams. Hestia, who has had very rich overseas volunteering and leadership experiences, shared her feeling on this:

*I think this team, we are very willing to share, but I have been thinking what was missing. We missed something that connects us even after returning to Taiwan. A few of us will chat individually, but not the whole group... maybe six of us, but it's hard to find two extras to join as myself, Amelie, Gwendolyn and Zoe have known each other before the trip and we meet regularly... It's like three small circles within the team... I think group dynamics helps to pull people closer, and that's what I have been looking for from each volunteering trip. This time, it's fine as I have made many great friends, but it's a pity that we did not form a very close team. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

Given the setup, the group 'improvised' in order to fulfil their quest for the collectivity and mutuality that was lacking in their daily life. Commuting was one of the best times for this to happen. Most of the time, travelling from the hotel in city centre to the village and school took around one hour each way and other sites at least half an hour. Most of the volunteers consciously proactively changed their seats every time to talk to different people. Despite this, the volunteers still found the group very loose, partly because of the diversity of the group. This group of Taiwanese volunteers were very diverse in terms of age and occupation; age of the volunteers ranged from 17 to 60, with seven undergraduates, eight postgraduates and teachers, and one about to retire. Many of the informants commented on this social distance, saying since they did not share many common interests, the lack of common topics divided the group resulting in some becoming closer friends while the others being only 'part of the same team' (Gwendolyn, Interview, 3/3/2017). When talking about this, Felicia felt a bit embarrassed, as she did not feel integrated, however she said, 'they are very nice'. She joined the trip with another volunteer who was also a university student but they both did not belong to the undergraduate group, thus these two mostly worked as a pair or in the same sub-team. This was perhaps because she did not actively work the belonging despite some others' attempts, resulting in loose sense of being-in. Also, this socio-demographic diversity has embedded some sort of moral distance in which the juniors were hesitant to make fun of the seniors, or their social interactions had to be proper. On the other hand, Vera who has been an experienced team leader of ELIV saw it as the Buddhist *yuan fen* (usually translated as fate or destiny, or 'fateful coincidence'). She said, 'if you got good *yuan fen*, then you would meet a group of nice people and get along well, otherwise you just try to maintain it during the trip' (Interview, 28/2/2017). Although they were not a homogeneous group of people, they still needed to maintain the relationship as this kind of mutuality was what they were seeking for. Even though they could not develop it into a friendship, they kept themselves in the moral relationship, as weak ties (Wellman, 1999) and did what they should do as part of the group, as all these together constituted their experience. Comparatively, TBW

was intended to produce intensive being-there, being-alongside and being-in experience among the group which they believed was conducive to sustaining the moral practices, while ELIV tended to facilitate the expansion of community for the development of the organisation and having the good to be done in the long-term (this will be further discussed in Section 5.3). Either only being-there or being-alongside and being-in, or both, the mutuality and liberation from burdens and restrictions in ordinary life facilitated the production of heightened experience, collective joy and unforgettable memories among the group in this extraordinary space, leading to a sense of *communitas*.

### 5.1.3 The *communitas*

*Communitas*, a modality of social relationship, is produced in the liminal space in which individuals engage in collective tasks and are treated as equals (Turner, 1969). As discussed earlier, the Taiwanese group lacked the intimate social settings outside the volunteering time, thus their interactions were more proper or moralised in a different way from the Hong Kong groups. It was doubted if they rather focused on having the good done than the outcomes of doing of good on the volunteers. Hence, in this section, I am going to look into how and what kinds of relationship were produced through the lens of liminality and *communitas*. In other words, how the sense of being-with was experienced which contributed to the sense of being-in, and vice versa.

Through the technologies of the sending organisations and volunteers' initiatives in actualising the fulfilment of collectivity, by engaging the volunteers in collective tasks with commitment, a sense of being-alongside was ascended to being-with. Indeed, pre-trip workshops had set the ground for producing *communitas*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, volunteers were required to attend pre-trip briefing and training workshops, during which they had started working together in preparing for the activities of the trip. Discussions, either in person or on social media, provided many opportunities for the volunteers to get to know one another, socialise, and find the suitable ways of interacting with different companions. Many informants, mostly of the Hong Kong groups, believed the relationship developed naturally, of which they said it was *yuan fen*. Because of this fateful coincidence, many of them said that they did not understand why but they felt they had known for long time when they met again at the airport. Rachel, who attended most of the pre-trip workshops, elaborated on this:

*In the first three pre-trip workshops, we were not too embarrassed or shy to talk to each other, we did talk. I'm sure we would not be close when we first met, but at the airport, we were like old friends who hadn't met for long time, maybe we knew that we would be spending the coming 12 days together, so naturally we did not have the estrangement. It's like skipping part of the process. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

This familiarity which was produced during the pre-trip preparation work possibly had helped created the sense of belonging, as mentioned earlier that a community had been formed by the sending organisations before the trip, before the actual work. They did not skip the process but because it was passive, intangible and ineffable (Bennett, 2012). The time upon arriving at the airport signified the beginning of the trip, the actual volunteering experience, leading them to develop a sense of community within such an ambience. The gate at the airport marked the literal entry into the liminality. In addition, as they had unconsciously become part of the community formed by the organisation while they could feel the sense of community, they had suspended many of their moral codes such as their presumptions about others and very quickly they made a transition from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Having the moral community formed before the trip and evolved during the trip, volunteers were provided the access to care for themselves in an inclusive and supportive space. In this space, a liminal space, everyday practices, norms, obligations, roles and expectations were altered and suspended. Here, volunteers found it extraordinary as they tended to or were able to do what they should not or could not do in their everyday life. As the informants pointed out, in-group relationship was developed into friendship and a sense of community was created quickly partly because people in the volunteering space were willing to let go of their pride or persona in their everyday life. The *communitas* produced helped them to liberate their emotions and the authentic self in a community of trust and intimacy.

#### *5.1.3.1 Liberating emotions*

Volunteering provided an inclusive space to liberate emotions suppressed in ordinary life. In the liminal leisure space, 'conventional social norms and regulations are often temporarily suspended as tourists take advantage of the relative anonymity and freedom from community scrutiny' (Kim & Jamal, 2007, p. 184). In their daily life, people have been more concerned about how others think about themselves. In an environment without disguise or free from moral codes, people could talk and express freely what have been suppressed for long.

Among the Taiwanese group, one significantly intense, collective memory was the revelation by Camellia about her past in the last sharing session of the trip. In the second last night in Siem Reap, we had gathered in a big circle in a rather relaxing context, we had the whole second floor of an ice cream parlour in city centre, public but private. The team leaders were hosting a reflection session using pictorial cards, in which each of us had to pick up one card about our past and one about our future, and then took turns to share. When it came to Camellia, she revealed her past based on the card 'Falling'. She was a key player in a cheering team in school but her performance was discontinued because of one fall which injured her spine. Since then, she went into serious depression and once attempted suicide, thus she had undergone a long period of medication

and treatment. Throughout the trip, from time to time, we knew that she was very good at gymnastic moves because of her training in cheering team, and several of us, including myself, were practising those moves during our free time and performing that in the opening of the hygiene education day in the village. However, this was the first time she shared the whole story and feelings entirely, genuinely in front of the group. It was also the first time after the accident that she opened up herself and revealed all her emotions that had been contained for a long period of time. As she spoke, she was crying, while the rest of us were hung on to her words and cried as well. Personal stories shared in this reflection session had emotionally connected one another, giving her enormous confidence to speak up as she felt being cared for. She said,

*over time, we would get used to wearing a mask when interacting with others, you would treat others very well or politely, or maintain your image, and hold your real feelings. But this team created a very nice atmosphere that made me feel that I don't need to disguise myself or wear a mask. So, in those eight days, I felt like I had not been talking for long time and wanted to tell whatever I could, a kind of self-liberation and it felt great, and made me feel that these people are whom I can speak to, about my personal things, and they are not prejudiced, so I felt ready and confident to share. (Interview, 25/2/2017)*

This was also the value of community that the trust and reciprocated care produced the right atmosphere for them to liberate their emotions, and that revealing scars from their past was not bad or wrong. The value of this collective space was also the cultivation and exercise of moral capacity and developing empathy with others (Vetlesen, 1993; as cited in Smith, 1999). In this context, people were engaged intensely and enhancing attachment, getting related to one another. Everyone was moved by her story. This was partly because they shared the same cultural background in Asian societies where expressing feelings and emotions are usually restricted. This is also particularly a norm across Asian cultures that people should not show their weaknesses. People tend to reveal and celebrate success and veil failure, especially to strangers. Therefore, this suspension of moral codes and liberation of emotions drew them closely together. York in his 60s, said,

*most remarkable memory was the sharing by Camellia, it's very brave to share the most embarrassing and shameful experience with others, maybe she had suppressed it for long, so sharing it with others is good for her. Sometimes, people enclose themselves, protect themselves, due to self-esteem, so as not to unveil the worse side of themselves. Maybe it's okay to share in front of friends, but it's hard to reveal your saddest, ugliest, worst experiences of side in front of strangers. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

In traditional Chinese families, communications between parents and children usually are not direct and explicit. As discussed in previous chapter, parents tend to transmit the sense of responsibility implicitly rather than discursively. The traditional familial setting does not provide a space of openness. Thus, the volunteers were taking advantage of this freedom and openness in a volunteering space to express their emotions when others would not be judgemental. For example, Xena shared:

*I don't feel the same atmosphere in my family. Usually we follow what parents say, so we are very well-disciplined kids. My parents are very protective, sometimes we try to let them know that we have grown up, but the key is that we do not communicate so often that we seldom express our thoughts, it partially affects how I behave in school... It's somehow influenced by my family background as I don't have such practice at home. I want to practise how to express my thoughts or feelings, because it's not common in my family. (Interview, 21/2/2017)*

In addition to the cultural background, we are in a neoliberal and individualistic society in which people are alienated and do not show care to others (Kipnis, 2007). This, to some extent, has discouraged people to share their feelings and emotions and quest for caring in a reciprocal relationship between the cared for and the carer. This is vividly experienced by Camellia during her time of undergoing and overcoming distress and depression. As she said,

*not many people in my social circle in Tainan know about this [her accident and depression], even though a few knew about it, they just got to know but not really cared for me... In our education in Taiwan, you are never taught how to care for or to console others, so you will not know how to deal with it when you encounter such situation, people just know about it but will not say anything, they care more about their own. This team makes me feel that it is not a problem to speak it out, they all can understand my feeling, are empathetic. Such caring is very invaluable and hard to find in Taiwan. (Interview, 25/2/2017)*

This generation seems to experience a cultural confusion when they are under the influence of both traditional Chinese and Western values. On the one hand, people tend to be implicit in caring about and for others although they are willing to show care, based on traditional values. On the other hand, under the neoliberal times, people are getting more individualistic and become responsible for themselves. There has been a gap for this generation in the way of being in a social relationship, the way of expressing care, and the awareness that they can be cared by others. Thus, through these open dialogues, full liberation of emotions in front of the group, what was fostered here was their moral capacity, their ability to develop empathy for others in proximity (Vetlesen, 1993; as cited in Smith, 1999). This helps to fill the moral vacuum, the lost moral fabrics perceived by the informants. The atmosphere transmitted through this setting also created a safe space for the volunteers to share, reveal their true self allowing them to explore and seek their self-identity which might have been hidden or suppressed in their daily life when people are self-protected or care about their personal image.

#### *5.1.3.2 Liberating the authentic self*

For Foucault, a new concern with the self will involve a new experience of the self, so we should endeavour to shape our ethos through an aesthetics of self-development (Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987). Liberating the authentic self is a form of caring for the self, which is not necessarily of self-interest but for the well-being of

the individuals. It is also the practice through which the individuals are conscious of their status in the formation of ethical subject of their conduct (Dilts, 2011). Caring for the self has been restricted by the informants' everyday obligations that they need to fulfil their roles in different settings and to do what is expected from the roles. As entering into liminality, volunteers in this space were separated from restrictions or escape from their frustrations in their daily life, as well as free from the everyday burden of, for example, being a friendly colleague at workplace or a good daughter at home, although informants in this research did not encounter difficult existential questions as suggested in previous studies (e.g. Brown, 2013; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). When everyone is treated as equals and share similar purposes, the informants believed it was a space free from those competitions or conflicts commonly found in everyday life. Rather, people were showing more care for others and expressing their true self to be cared. Therefore, time of volunteering allowed a temporal suspension of the everyday identity or status for volunteers to search for the authentic self. For instance, during one reflection session, Amelie admitted that she cared about how others see her, therefore she had been depicting herself as the normative 'good' daughter at home and teacher in school. Only at the time of volunteering could she tell others honestly that she cared about others' impression of her while she has been gradually looking for the self she likes through volunteering overseas. Hestia has also been exploring and experimenting different dimensions of herself on service trips and the one that suits the community she belongs to each time, on the one hand to understand and unleash the better self, and on the other hand to enjoy this designated time-space without judgements and conflicts. She said,

*in my workplace we have much more office politics, now as long as I see people of that gang in the office, I don't feel comfortable... my state of mind... is totally different from that when I am working, as I have a lot of baggage in workplace, but it's very relaxing in Cambodia. That's the true me... I think it's because of the teammates... my state in Qinghai is much closer to the true self than in Cambodia. I should put it this way, every state is 'me', but the 'me' in Qinghai is the one I like most, I am also 'me' in school, but I find the self that I like from volunteering, so it depends on the companions. If I can talk freely, that's because of the people around me. Amelie said she cares about how others perceive her, so do I. When people around me can accept this state of 'me', then I will release it; if I show the most comfortable 'me' but people are negative towards it, then I won't be that 'me' anymore in front of them. It's like to try out which state of 'me' suits that context. The state of 'me' in Cambodia is the second one I like most. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

During the time of volunteering, the moral codes of encountering difficult people in places full of competition, politics and conflicts were suspended, the volunteers were free from the bounded self in front of those people. Although they needed to suspend their own self to engage in collectivity and become part of the community, it was not a self-denial (Buber, 1958; Crossley, 1996); they have the safe space to seek the authentic self or experience different facets of the self. This state of being-with stresses the relations with others and implies understanding of others, and reciprocity. Thus, being-with was enhanced by their being-in experience, as the

belonging suggests social relations created that facilitate the expression of the true self. Besides exploring and expressing different beings of the self, volunteers were interacting with the team in a way that the normal presentation of self was temporarily suspended from the quotidian (Goffman, 1959; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). This helped offload some of the pressure that they need to disguise their ugly side or to perform well in front of others in their ordinary life. For instance, Quinn found his way of being the true self in this liminal setting:

*it's different from interacting with them in Hong Kong as they may hide some of their personality in different occasions such as a reunion dinner, but you can't do that there, unless you put on a mask for 10 days, it's not possible, there is time when you sleep, when you relax, otherwise you will feel great pressure. Meanwhile, I knew I had to live with them, from the moment we set off, I did not mind... I was being myself, for example I did burp when eating or scratch my tummy after eating. I would not have such behaviour in Hong Kong, but I did not care as I was living my life there in Cambodia. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

Expressing the true self was possible because the sense of being-with was intense. They were engaged and connected so as the *communitas* was produced among them that made them feel being with the group so that the true presentation of self became normative and explicit at the same time accepted by the rest of the group. Given a free and open environment among the group, volunteers were not only more willing to share stories about their past, but they were also very relaxing in the way of living, especially when they zoomed into daily routines which have always been ignored or avoided talking about however essential in their everyday practices or rhythms. When people were free from much of their everyday pressure, daily rhythms of sleeping and waking, eating and defecating, as well as injury and ache became their main concerns about and among themselves. For instance, some of the Hong Kong volunteers were worried about suffering from constipation from the very beginning of the trip, and each of us had to 'check in' for our first stool until the fifth day when Gloria had hers. All of us were very worried about her and at the same time we were teasing at how much she had eaten from the first day. Ilsa thought the group were back to the primitive life when they were in Cambodia. She said,

*people became very primitive, I am pretty sure people are not like that in Hong Kong, but they were very primitive, didn't care about clean or not, bare foot, kept talking about pooping, because that's obviously the very basic and needed, they won't do it in Hong Kong, but every day we were talking about constipation, 'it's not okay, I can't poop'. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

These physiological needs are very basic and visceral; however, talking about them is restrained or ignored in the daily life. Therefore, these interactions in this setting were not simply expressions of biological necessity but were intimate experience with bodily rhythms of actions and genuine conversations with joy, which constituted part of ways in which the volunteers made a space for caring about themselves and others and at the same time a space for being cared (Milligan & Wiles, 2010). The collective joy produced



contributed to the development of bonding and friendship among volunteers and nurture of I-Thou relations that many informants believed to be less likely outside the liminal setting of volunteer tourism. This, in turn, produced heightened experience and a sense of belonging. For those joking to embarrass themselves or revealing the true self, these were also active moves of doing belonging. In this space of caring and being cared, they did not need to hide the fact of suffering from constipation, or to feel shamed or embarrassed to share in public, which was not a proper manner in their daily life. These seemingly minor issues embodied their freedom and fulfilment of their need to be heard and cared. This was similar to the time in the kitchen and bedroom we discussed earlier. Through liberating emotions and the authentic self, the volunteers entered the state of being with others through which they found their own being (Heidegger, 1949; as cited in Shubin, 2011). Sometimes, prejudice or stereotypes make people judge a book by its cover. The social interactions in such perceived inclusive context allowed the volunteers to reflect on their different ways of being in their daily life. As Camellia said, 'I got another stimulation that I cannot have such stereotype or prejudice' (Interview, 25/2/2017). It shows how volunteers returned home with a different perspective, bridging the ethics of care from the liminal space back to the ordinary time-space framed with their ordinary ethics. Their experience of liminality was so intense that it may feedback to their aspect of thought as well as dimension of action. This effect can possibly carry onto the aggregation stage of the *communitas* when they are returning with a new status or even actions for changes (this will be further discussed in the next chapter).

### 5.1.3.3 *Communitas over space and time*

*Communitas* is not vanishing right after the trip; as it is not on our timescale, it still lingers in its own way as time passes, in and out at different spatiotemporal coordinates. On the one hand, it is recognised that the intensity of sentiments may be reduced with increasing distance from the objects (Ginzburg, 1994); on the other hand, Davies and Herbert (1993) argue that relationships can be maintained over greater distance with the support of the global sense of place. The *communitas* produced helped to hold the dots in the web of relationships together, strengthening their bonding and creating more I-Thou relations, as volunteers were the other subjects encountering and experiencing things and people together. This results in experience with great intensity because they fully revealed their emotions, their true self, and all the basics became the most important. Although the trips were very short, the bonding developed was far stronger than expected due to the intensity and active moves of doing belonging. Ethan returned as a volunteer and project coordinator because of the meaningful relationship developed. He said,

*...the 10 days were like one year there. And they are like oldies, that's weird thing about bonding developed through service trip, because 10 days were not just like 10 days, it's the time we spent together, we got to know one another, bit by bit the bonding was very deep...*

*It's the second year of our relationship, we all still have the initiatives to organise gatherings, to maintain our relationship. Even the locals asked about us, asked how the rest of the team are when a few of us visited them again this year. The bonding is real, and that made me join again, in the organising committee to promote this, as helping others to build a network like this is also something worthwhile and meaningful. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

Developing and sustaining their relationship was not simply based on the house they built for the family or mangrove seedlings they planted to the sea; it was largely because they built the house and planted the seedlings together, it was the time they spent days and nights throughout the trip, making it a long-lasting relationship. The previous experience of Ethan was so intense that he decided to join again in building and expanding this kind of network. This moral community has evolved in the way that fosters the continuation of participation in volunteering or working towards causes concerned by the volunteers (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Among the Hong Kong volunteers, five of them joined the service trip organised by TBW in January 2016, and they joined the same organisation again as project coordinators of the projects in 2017. After their first experience, they stayed in touch; working together and sharing about the second experience with the rest of the group also helped drawing the whole group together, as if they were going on the trip together again. The collective joy made these five volunteers join again, while the *communitas* folded over and back reminding their belonging to this deep relationship formed in the year before. Their previous experience created their relations with this country, 'this land' as they phrased it, embodied through the house remained on this piece of land. Returning to this place by some of the people in the group retrieved all sorts of collective memories and the doing of good. Despite the physical distance, this facilitated the emotional connection with the country they visited and the people they met together, sustaining the moral community in which the moral subjects continue to participate alongside.

In order to sustain the joy from going on the service trip, Amelie, Camellia and Hestia decided to join ELIV as team leaders. During their training for team leaders, they were supporting each other, exchanging information of different sessions, and sharing readings and feedback, they posted on social media and shared in our Line (a messaging app) group. This has helped to consolidate the bonding created during the trip, both among themselves through more shared experiences and among the group through emotional connection despite physical separation. Wendy also attempted to maintain the relationship by encouraging some of the volunteers of her previous teams to apply for team leader position, as she believed that by staying in the same moral circle of like-minded people (this form of moral world will be discussed in the next section), their friendship would grow, accumulating social capital simultaneously. Their extended involvement also brings them into another circle of volunteers and industry practitioners, extending their social networks and keeping

this moral community to evolve. Wendy, who has been volunteering and leading service trips since her undergraduate studies, said,

*sometimes, good relationship will further develop. I will ask some of them to become team leaders, so we can lead together, go to Cambodia together or do something, that relationship will become closer. Some even become very good friends, and hang out. Not many cases of becoming good friends with other volunteers except those who have become team leaders, only then can we have more chances of getting in touch and talk deeper, have common topics. (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

Good relationships would mean those which can maintain the sense of belonging, the process of moral selving in the community. From what Wendy said, the service trip is an extraordinary space and time for trust, intimacy and deep interactions to be nurtured. Gwendolyn gave a similar account of how her relationship with other volunteers has been maintained due to shared vision of moral actions. She said,

*we met up from time to time, we organise gatherings for different districts, such as reunion or sharing in Taichung, then we would talk and become closer. Through regular team leader training, we had some activities and sharing sessions, sharing about values and accomplishing something together, it's kind of comradeship, then we know each other better. After all, a few of us would find that we share a lot of interests or have common topics, then we may have gatherings more often. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

Over time, Gwendolyn and her companions have kept conversation about the ideas of volunteering and organised reunions. Although they joined projects from different organisations in between, their connection has not been discontinued as they still actively maintain their sense of being-in this moral community, making them closer and strengthening their friendship. Their ongoing relationship has maintained their social capital accumulated through the network and drawn them to volunteer together again. The evolution of the moral community further develops over time. Being part of the community allows them to find the like-minded people which they could help each other to develop the better self. Such kind of regular focal practices have also become their serious leisure activities (Stebbins, 2001), to engage in the means which leads to the better self as the outcome. They are further connected because of the doing of good at the aggregation stage, which leads to deeper, more meaningful relationship.

## **5.2 Moral community of like-minded people**

Besides the community of the volunteers on the same trip, a moral community of like-minded people has also been identified. Many of the informants were regular overseas volunteers or team leaders of different organisations. A few of them had already known each other due to the group offer or the same circle of SEN teachers, meanwhile their previous experiences gave them more topics to interact. Through sharing of previous volunteering experiences, discussions about organising service trips, and some issues of the places

they volunteered in, they developed more empathy with others. Chatting among the volunteers also connected people of the same interest and reconnect people in the same circle. Through these social interactions, some of them discovered that they had common friends or they joined service projects of the same organisations at different times. Dots were linked up into lines and then webs of social relationships, finding their status of being-in and expanding these moral circles of people with shared interests.

The informants tend to share more and with more people after the service trip. They focused on what they did as a volunteer, the daily routines, some challenges they faced, also the things and people they saw as well as their feelings towards Cambodia. Relatively, the volunteers felt more excited and enthusiastic about sharing about their experience with ‘those who understand’. ‘Those who understand’ refer to people with similar attitude and previous experiences of overseas volunteering. They found it easier and more rewarding to talk to friends or colleagues with previous experiences in overseas volunteering as they are already in the same circle of interests, the wider moral community of volunteers. Since they have shared interests, they could talk more often, more detailed, and more like ‘in the same field’ so that they could feel for each other. These people are the appropriate audience who would appreciate and recognise what the volunteers have done. ‘Those who understand’ are also people showing interest in participation but encountering constraints in doing so. As the informants said, some of their friends wanted to join but were restricted by their job or financial conditions, therefore sharing with them was pleasant, because these people were willing to listen to volunteers’ stories and respectful for their choice, and they asked for details of their experience. Their listening engaged both the storyteller and listener in a temporal space in which the storyteller (volunteer) fulfilled the need to tell others about the heightened experience, found the recognition because the listener responded positively, as well as reaffirmed what was believed by the storyteller. In this sense, they were actively and consciously creating belongingness or constructing this moral community through the recognition so as to further construct the moral agency and dispositions to volunteering as the appropriate choice. Amelie shared,

*for those who understand, such as Zoe, I would explain. She came to me a few months before the trip telling me that she’s interested, so I shared my experience with her... what we did, why I think it is great... Some may not spend money for volunteering, but they respect what we do, like one of my very good friends, so I share with her every time after the trip about what we did there. I did ask her to join, but her financial condition is not so good that it will be a burden for her. But when I shared with her, she’s very willing to listen. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Their listening means that their experience was being heard and their values were being agreed with. This act of sharing is less about virtue signalling but more about self-recognition as they had received more cynical responses or comments on their participation before the trip. The volunteers were expecting their audience to

feel the same excitement and probe into more details, and the right details. This was active move of building the sense of community, doing attachment to the moral community.

Before the projects started, the volunteers shared with others such as family, friends and colleagues, but most of them kept a very low profile except those who posted on social media asking people to donate items to bring over. They did not share with many people partly because the volunteers thought that other people do not have a clear idea about overseas volunteering. People were rather more concerned about Cambodia as the destination than the act of volunteering, because the informants heard a lot of responses especially from their families regarding safety and health issues arising from the stereotypes about Cambodia as an underdeveloped country. Many volunteers were frustrated when talking about the condition of Cambodia with others before they went because most people only imagined Cambodia as an underdeveloped and backward country full of landmines, and volunteering in Cambodia was doing something 'dangerous and dirtying their hands'. For example, Ilsa shared how her family responded when she told them after she got admitted into the programme:

*When I told them, their response was like 'ha, going to such place'... My family had zero concept, probably only knew about the Khmer Rouge, so they referred it to 'such place', guess they would have the same response for Cambodia, Vietnam and India. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

She felt frustrated because the act of doing good was being muddled. As people mainly cared about Cambodia as the destination of receiving good rather than the volunteers' action of doing something good, the act of telling others about their participation before the trip did not make the volunteers feel fulfilled. After the trip, it became more meaningful for the volunteers as it was all about their encounters and achievements. However, sometimes they only received very cliché responses, for instance, Ilsa said 'they mainly sighed, "how unfortunate". When I said I would go again, they just replied "it's nice"' (Interview, 20/1/2017). The response was not so zealous that the volunteers could not feel the recognition for what they had done.

Volunteers were also concerned about what and how to tell about their experience. Some volunteers wrote a lot of postcards to their friends telling them what they had seen in Cambodia, while some shared their stories through giving souvenirs. These postcards and souvenirs, originated in the place of their heightened experience, came with the volunteers 'back to the ordinary realm almost as a living messenger of the extraordinary' (Gordon, 1986, p. 140). The things they brought from Cambodia represented the quality of their extraordinary experience of volunteering, embodied their encounter with the people and the land. This is not only about the object but also the story or memory behind, therefore they wanted those who received the postcards or souvenirs to treat them extraordinary, or 'at least not ordinary' (Zoe, Interview, 22/2/2017).

For instance, Gwendolyn wrote the story about the palm sugar and the village on cards and attached them to each pack of palm sugar as a souvenir for her colleagues and friends, as she wanted to share about her trip through this physical form of embodiment. On the card, she explained why palm trees were cut down in exchange for money and how the villagers forgot the importance of these so-called national trees, and what kinds of work was done by ELIV to assist the sale of the palm sugar to volunteers. As she was deeply touched by this story, she wanted to share it with others together with the palm sugar produced in that village. In response, the volunteers wanted the person receiving it to feel the emotions and connections. As what Zoe said,

*after I explained, their response made me feel a bit sad, I expected them to at least feel a bit amazed like saying 'really?!', but they were very plain. Later, I told them to keep the sugar in the fridge, and they just cared about how to handle it. They were not interested in the story, but I insisted in telling them. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

The palm sugar embodied contact with the country although the volunteers did not see the villagers nor that village. Since it did not get through material form, her insistence in telling implied her seeking a sense of recognition and fulfilment from others. However, because of the varied responses, the volunteers preferred giving souvenirs to people who would cherish or respect what they were given. Amelie said, '... I am very willing to share with those who can understand, but not those who just bring it back home and think it is just ordinary sugar, something very sweet wrapped in leaves and bamboo' (Interview, 22/2/2017). Probably the palm sugar was the same as those produced anywhere else, but the values were different as the trees which were the main element of the story they shared, were grown in that particular village. Therefore, the palm sugar wrapped in the leaves from those trees were different from those sold in supermarkets or souvenir shops, although they had never been in contact with those villagers. Some of the informants found it meaningless to share their experience with people who did not appreciate or support the idea of overseas volunteering. The major criticism they encountered was 'why paying to volunteer'. This has also been debated in the literature largely from the perspective of motivation and decision-making but not about the identity and modes of being in the moral community. Facing such criticism, volunteers like Amelie questioned, 'why do I need to share with those who would pick on those things?' She said,

*if anyone asked me why I had to volunteer, I would reply 'because I want to', I once replied a senior in this way because I was too irritated. He kind of doubted me in volunteering, I already implied that I did not want to explain, as we all had our own decision, but he kept challenging me about this, I thought that's my choice, none of his business, oh yes, I replied him 'none of your business'. Like many other people, he doubted why you need to pay for volunteering... So, for those who can't understand, I do think that's not their business. You can think it's not worthwhile, but you should respect me, instead of saying as if I did something bad. NTD34000 for 8 days, very worthwhile, slightly higher for Waker [another NGO in*

*Taiwan], NTD40000 for 14 days, about the same for travelling, I feel very happy. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

This happened mainly between the volunteers and senior people, either colleagues or relatives, because the volunteers found those of the same generation tend to be able to understand this practice – paying to volunteer and overseas volunteering itself. Amelie received such kind of doubt and criticism from her mother and other relatives since her first service trip. Many times she had got into the same situation where she was in a conundrum of avoiding, explaining briefly or replying rudely because after all it was her freedom and right of choice. The act of doing good is not something bad, but possibly the way of having good done does not go in line with the traditional values. While Amelie could not convince these people to share the same values, her response and continued participation indeed actively strengthened her state of being-in the moral community.

Beyond the perceived moral community, talking about volunteering is not spontaneous. On the one hand, in daily life, people just do not talk about volunteering or doing service, or ask trivial questions if they do. On the other hand, volunteers did not find a spontaneous moment to start the topic and share their experience with a group who were not on the same trip, as it sounded too deliberate as if they were showing off. This echoes with a narrative discussed in other studies (e.g. Couch & Georgeou, 2017; Henry, 2019; Ong et al., 2018) that many volunteers easily fall back to the old everyday rhythms and life politics upon returning home. The volunteers did not find interest in their experiences or support for developing their ideas which they learnt during the trip. Although the examples here are not as extreme as that in the study conducted by Couch and Georgeou (2017) in which a respondent said ‘I really felt that no-one understood me or gave a shit’ (p. 28), it has shown a gap in bridging the rhythms between the moral communities. In contemporary society, social interactions are not so frequent that care and mutuality do not come naturally. Despite the frustration, disappointment or predicament, after all, the volunteers were more concerned about how others think about their participation, like what Bella said ‘at least they think it’s a good thing.’ From when they talked, whom they talked to, what they talked about and what not, they were actively creating a moral community of like-minded people and their sense of being-in to differentiate themselves from those who did not share the same values of overseas volunteering as the form of doing good. They told the stories differently accordingly to audience. The telling and re-telling of those stories to like-minded people helps to shape the stories, which in turn, becomes the vehicle of the consciousness. The recognition that volunteers received could then be effectively internalised to the habitus with dispositions that support volunteer tourism as an unquestioned choice.

### 5.3 Moral community with the locals

Although this study was looking at the practices of volunteers, they did not exist in the context alone, neither did they want to visit without having any contacts with local people. When asked about the differences between making a donation and volunteering, the volunteers emphasised the importance of being-alongside and being-with, encountering of and with the local people. Through the encounters, moral community with locals also emerged. In this section, I am going to elaborate what kind of moral community was formed among volunteers and local people through being-alongside and being-with, and how it evolved with the practices of doing belonging.

#### 5.3.1 Morality of having good done

When the volunteers were asked about the differences between making a donation and volunteering, many of them emphasised that making a donation only embodies ‘doing something good’, it is rather like a culture or a trend. Dawn even classified different forms of doing something good, saying making donation can be the form for the time when people could not go on a service trip. Thus, making donation means the work of doing good is done by the organisations, but then it raises the question of how the good is done. As criticised in the literature and by some sending organisations, sometimes things were not given or brought in for the right context or right people. For example, abandoned squat toilets have been built in the open space without cover and sending organisation did not explain to the villagers what the toilets were and how to use them, or bicycles for adults were donated for primary school children as we could see school children riding the bicycles in strange postures in the village. When Wendy and Gordon (ELIV’s Project Director) were discussing about the facilities in the school, she said they were criticising at that time,

*the roofs were made of metal sheet, must be very noisy during rainy days. There were obviously no thoughts or planning, or they even had not been to Cambodia before. Otherwise, they should have known about the weather in Cambodia, or have talked to the principal so that they would have known what materials should not be used... if they really have this intention, this would have been avoided. But obviously, it’s a product of donation from overseas. (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

Undeniably, the act of making a donation is not bad, but being there and alongside is important to have the good done properly. Being present in the place enabled seeing, to see what the local people tell them, how the local people live their lives, and what could be done. This seeing and being-alongside the local people helped the translation of need into authentic and relevant forms of care, like York said,

*to see what those people need, when we provide what they really need, appropriate, then the value is realised, but not giving them like a boat when there is no sea. The impact is the*



*greatest when things are used in the places where they are needed the most, that's not a matter of the amount of money. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Donation can be made by sending a cheque or online. This being-there could be achieved by the organisations' staff, but then the person making the act of doing the good is not seen. It is not a matter of the amount of money but what that amount of money can bring or tell – the action of doing good and the person of doing. The presence of volunteers to participate in the means made the care more visible and tangible as the outcomes of the activities in material forms such as the house and toilet built, 960 mangrove seeds collected and potted, and 1000 mangrove seedlings planted into the sea, and reciprocated through the smiles from and hand-shaking with local people as a thank-you. This made the abstract form of care become more direct as it was done and felt by the volunteers 'in the frontline' (Ilsa, interview, 20/1/2017). Meanwhile, moral fulfilment was embodied through these tangibles as the outcomes of their physicality, because the emotional connection with the people and their feelings or recognition for their move could not be transmitted by simply sending a cheque or one click for making a donation online. For example, Hestia received a parcel on the day before our interview. She thought it was her regular online shopping but then she realised it was a gift for her support to a homosexual-related campaign which she totally forgot when she did that online. The volunteers believed that although donation could be translated into physical forms of care, the personal connection was not embodied through and those objects would become empty and cold. Erica said,

*I think giving money to them directly is not so good, so maybe in another form. It [the house] is the outcome after we both pay efforts, instead of not doing anything but just getting... giving money. They may also contribute to some physical work, work together, in exchange for a house, which is better than hiring people to do and it's like a gift from nowhere. (Interview, 2/3/2017)*

Again, the house the family received was not simply a house. It was a house built together with the volunteers. Here, it is not about the absolute relationship between problem and solution, which is sending money and having the shelter problem solved. It is about the relational connection, the volunteers were seen and care was felt by the local people from the house they got. As the informants believed, the people living in very remote villages may not be able to receive much information from the outside world, their social circle is limited to their village. Having visits from people from outside is to connect them to the others and bring people back to the web of relationships, which cannot be achieved by sending donation. Quinn admitted that volunteering was not just about the direct problems but also being-alongside, the copresence. He said,

*having people going there, the focus is not on what those people do, but rather the relationship built through interaction. Like what I said earlier, they felt happy because of us doing something there, but maybe it's not exactly because of what we did, but because of us being there in the same space, living together for a period of time, chatting and interacting, which brought them the happiness. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

The happiness as the outcome of seeing the volunteers was indeed perceived by the volunteers themselves.

Selina also doubted the embodiment of the donation,

*if I were the locals, I would not just want to receive the money, I would feel rather happy if you could come to help our community, because I think the connection between people... when there were some problems in my place, others were willing to come to make some improvements, instead of seeing the problems or poverty in my place and giving me money. It would feel like we were doing very worse, we were very inferior, so that we would need money from others to help us. In this way, locals would not feel good although they will receive money to help solve their problems, money is not helpful all the time. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

Volunteers believed that they were making the effort to connect with other people as well as getting people connected. This morality of being-alongside was also justified by the organisation staff. In various occasions, the staff of the organisation convinced the volunteers that the value of the act was not just the objects the local people would receive at the end, it is the process of volunteers and local people working together to achieve the common goal, the local participation, and the interaction and cooperation in the time spent together that made the act meaningful. Volunteers were told that for those who received the house or the toilet at the end of the project, they would think ‘it is a group of people coming over to help do it’ in Bun Chou’s words (Bun Chou is the local Project Manager of ELIV). This was not simply a give-and-take relationship; it was a form of sharing and mutuality which ELIV staff had emphasised throughout the programme. Zoe remembered Dalinh, the chief translator of ELIV, once said,

*if workers are hired to build the house, all done by themselves, the story of this house is just about Cambodians, but now it’s built by volunteers, the driver, locals, workers, all together, the halo of this house is the total of these people, its meaning is more significant. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Without the visit of the volunteers, it could be an I-It relationship in which the people getting the house and the toilet experienced a detached thing, fixed in the location where they were built. On the other hand, the presence of volunteers and the interaction and collaboration created the I-Thou relationship which was a more dynamic, living process of participating in the encountering with the others, both by the volunteers and the local people. Although they did not have frequent direct communications due to language barrier, the time when they were learning how to build the walls of the house by halving the bamboos and polishing them for the frame, and then weaving bamboo leaves all constituted part of the experience as all these parts were then assembled into the house.

This being-alongside, I-Thou relationship did not belittle the status of the local people as they were engaged in a rather harmonious relationship with a common goal, trust and mutuality. On the one hand, this reciprocal relationship was constructed by the organisations as they framed such practice of volunteering as ‘sharing’

and ‘exchange’ between the volunteers and the local people instead of sending aid. On the other hand, because of the tasks they had to do, the volunteers perceived a community of themselves and local people embodying the fulfilment of collectivity that the volunteers were seeking for. Construction work of both service projects was led by the chief construction worker and facilitated by other workers who were recruited from the neighbourhood or villagers who had the know-hows, here I used the Taiwanese project as the example to illustrate. As it was the first time for most of the team doing construction work, volunteers had to listen to the demonstration and instructions given by the locals and divided themselves into small task teams. When the locals were taking the lead, rather than asking through the interpreters, the volunteers learnt how to speak in Khmer and then talked to the local workers directly such as when they wanted the local workers to demonstrate driving a nail into the bamboo thins. On the day of building the toilet, Bosco was in the task team that was building the foundation with bricks and the whole structure with bamboos and metal roof sheets, therefore he was working closely with the lead worker whom we called ‘*me cheang*’ (‘me cheang’ means leader in Khmer). After the shadowing and cooperation, he and *me cheang* developed some sort of rapport and synchronisation despite their language barrier. At the end, the lead worker appraised Bosco for picking up the skill very quickly while Bosco thought he was working like an apprentice of him. The whole process was led by the locals because of their skills and assisted by the volunteers. Volunteers were amazed by how proficient the locals were in driving a nail into the bamboo thins in two hits while themselves destroyed several nails before getting one done. Admittedly, the volunteers were not there to make things perfect, but the outcome embodied moral coequality and equal status which was a result of the social structure getting loose when the socio-cultural background was overtaken by the skills and knowledge. It has also created and produced stronger sense of community between volunteers and local people they cooperated with, which is conducive to bring them to the state of betwixt and between.

### 5.3.2 The *communitas*

This collective engagement helped to produce the *communitas* among the volunteers and locals, which has seldomly been discussed in the literature. Under the *communitas* among volunteers, they were able to explore different dimensions of the self and reveal the true inner self. Together with the local people, *communitas* was also produced, during which volunteers constructed their identity through collective joy and recognition. In other words, besides understanding ‘who am I’, they were also doing ‘what am I’ through locals’ eyes as well as being in relation to the locals. Identity can be perceived as a self-conception, a presentation of the self. It is defined as ‘how we make sense of ourselves... It refers to lived experiences and all the subjective feelings associated with everyday consciousness’ (Rose, 1995, p. 88). From how the volunteers talked about their

experience, their relationship with the country and its people they visited and met, they have developed a sense of belonging to that country, because of their experiences of 'being' and 'knowing'. During a meeting with Simon, the Project Manager of Breakthrough Hong Kong which was one of the funders of TBW projects, he asked Ethan what made him stay in the project. Ethan told him, 'I like the people there, I think I have part of my identity there' (*TBW meeting, Hong Kong, 28/10/2016*). Simon shared the same feeling, as he gave up his managerial position in a human right auditing firm and returned to Breakthrough as the project manager, and said part of his identity was developed in Cambodia since his first visit. After their experience of presence in that country and spending time and working with locals, they felt things in that country were 'part of you'. This was possibly accumulated through the experience of *communitas* developed during the time with the local people.

The relationship between volunteers and locals was shifting in and out of liminality, and in-between *communitas* and community. Various types of *communitas* emerged, some were spontaneous or existential while some others were more normative being organised into the permanent social system (Turner, 1969). Although the volunteer-local relationship has been criticised as exploitative or unequal, the volunteers believed that they had a fair and equal relationship, particularly when they managed to interact like friends with mutual feelings of trust devoid of prejudice or assumptions. For example, Dawn said,

*I felt like I was not a volunteer, but it's hard to tell... it's an interaction between people, regardless of where you are from or your identity, simply the interaction between this person and that person at that moment, a fair relationship. (Interview, 26/2/2017)*

This was the *communitas* developed in the liminal space, everyone was treated as equals, regardless of their socio-cultural backgrounds. More specifically, this was the existential or spontaneous *communitas* between volunteers and locals, as it was more transient in nature especially during such kind of counter-culture happenings (Turner, 1969). Some informants said that they were more like one of those transients of villagers' life, unlike the relations with the interpreters and local Project Manager as they had more contact and interactions. Therefore, when meeting the villagers, the volunteers were still maintaining some of the moral codes from their daily life. For instance, Zoe was careful in managing the representation of herself as an outsider in front of the villagers. Due to language barrier, she said, 'we used gesture, body language, smile, you have to smile, otherwise look grumpy, as they could not understand what we were talking about' (*Interview, 22/2/2017*). In these kinds of relations, the social structure was not so loose that cultural norms were in place; but the partial connection and attachment, or cooperation kept them being in a community. Despite that, there were moments of engagement of both volunteers and locals in collective tasks which trust was developed while some of their suspicions towards strangers were suspended in their casual interactions.

In the fishing village, Hong Kong-Team A were staying at the eco-tourism site with some distance from villagers' houses. When we were doing seedling nursery, some villagers gathered around to see the new group of volunteers, trying to interact. As the local volunteers were also working together, they helped with the translation making the communication possible. They were making fun of a few of us, feeding snacks to each of us, or giving advice on the side (Figure 13). Although not everyone was working collectively to finish the task, the moments when they gathered around and interacted with the volunteers created collective joys, making the volunteers feel the time with the locals like 'the time with family'. Bella said she could feel the trust between the volunteers and the locals,

*they were very willing to share. We had an interpreter with us, they shared a lot, I could feel they were very sincere. Some even treated us some snacks, showed us some photos, not wary at all, didn't see us as strangers... When we went to buy coffee from the tuck shop, the owner was very friendly, she always taught us Khmer. They really wanted to have some sort of interactions with us. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*



Figure 13 Villagers gathering around to laugh, give advice and share snacks when volunteers were working for the nursery pots

For the tuck shop owner, selling coffee was good for her business undoubtedly. However, from what the volunteers perceived and believed, the time buying coffee and learning Khmer made them feel that the locals were welcoming the volunteers. Each cup of coffee they bought represented several minutes of interactions with the owner, meanwhile their relationship was evolving from volunteers ordering in English to specifying the amount of sugar, condensed milk and ice of their order in Khmer. The locals then felt delighted or laughed at their pronunciation. Here, it does not matter if mutual trust has been developed; what does matter is that the volunteers felt or believed in it, which helped rationalise their presence, joy and experience of being-with made the experience of volunteering ethical and intense. Such gestures as sharing snacks and making efforts

to chat with the volunteers seemed to recognise the volunteers as part of them, at least the volunteers believed so, and the volunteers were made belonged to a community maintained with ethical relationship. Their responses such as learning Khmer and interacting with locals in return were also ways of seeking recognition from them.

The local people were also proactive in approaching the volunteers and building up trust with them. Rather than making the volunteers belong, the informants believed that the locals were trying to get immersed into the volunteer group, making themselves belong to the community of volunteers. Volunteers were surprised that the locals were very willing to share with strangers, a lot about their personal stories, meanwhile the volunteers also told the locals much about themselves, which they normally would not do in Hong Kong or Taiwan. As the locals revealed about themselves, the trust and thus the emotional connection was so intense that they talked further and deeper, without disguising themselves with their persona in ordinary life or being bounded by their moral codes of not talking about personal shames or stigmas. Both the volunteers and the locals wanted to create ‘we’ relations out of the collective settings, although they would possibly be temporary, which however depends on intensity of the relations and how the collective joy is to be strengthened when they have to be apart. One palpable example was the sharing at the farewell dinner on the last day between the teachers and Hong Kong-Team B. During their stay in the village, a very young part-time teacher of the kindergarten went to talk to different volunteers from time to time. At the dinner, she shared her story that she had to work in another country for better salary to ease the financial burden of the family. As told by the informants, everyone was crying when listening to her story, carried away by her, at that time they felt their distance was getting reduced as they were sharing something really personal. After returning to Phnom Penh from the village, Selina was sobbing with tears rolling in her eyes when she told us this experience. She told me later,

*we heard the story of the girl whose family condition was quite worse, mum was sick, and she had to stop schooling to work in factory for her family for a period of time while she really liked studying, but soon she had to stop schooling again and go to work in South Korea. Before the trip, I did not expect a local would share everything about herself with us, she cried so badly, very sad, and she was also unwell. She felt so sad to leave her family. This time, I realised our conversation could go so deep... I think our interactions made them feel that we were friends, closer. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

This is similar to Camellia’s liberation of genuine emotions and the true self in front of strangers. Here, the local teacher did not feel inferior when compared with the volunteers coming from Hong Kong, neither did she feel ashamed to unveil her saddest story and deepest feelings to them. The *communitas* was produced from the accumulated trust from their interactions, and this *communitas* was not so spontaneous, it was getting

more of normative *communitas* when their relationship was growing from the incidental volunteer-local contact to friendship. In order to maintain the connection or relationship, the team gave the girl a memento which she could bring with her to another country. Melanie shared,

*we wanted to give her an HKU hoodie but it's too dirty with concrete and paint on it, didn't seem good. Quinn had several guitar picks, and he gave the one he liked the most to the girl... now we still keep contact on Facebook, messaging to see what happens on each other's side. She told us that she felt unhappy at night, and she would miss us after we leave, so we message her every day. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

Despite the physical distance, they wanted to maintain the experience of being-with over time and distance, or at least the guitar pick marked the trip, their intimate time, their time being with each other although the time they spent together was short. In comparison, returning volunteers or team leaders of the same organisation tend to develop a closer relationship with the local staff in general, making *communitas* grow into a stronger sense of being-in-the-community. Wendy has been a volunteer and then team leader of ELIV since 2011, from time to time she has developed more established relationship with the locals so that their conversation was more intimate and personal. She recalled one of her experiences,

*I always want to sit next to them during lunchtime, squatting. One time, the driver, interpreters, workers, villagers and team leaders, we were sitting together on the grass. After eating for a while, the chief worker started to ask, 'when are you getting married, haven't seen your boyfriend even you have come so many times? Do you have a boyfriend?' (Interview, 1/3/2017)*

This hints a temporal dimension of belongingness. Although Wendy or other returning volunteers do not maintain frequent contact with the locals after leaving Cambodia, they still have this emotional connection. The connection seems to be on hold when the volunteers return home, and it re-emerges when they volunteer through the same organisation. This is similar to my relationship with a family I visited in 2015 when I was the project coordinator of TBW during which I was guiding my small team of volunteers in conducting home visit. Since then, the father and his three children have stayed in touch with me on Facebook, and I went to visit them as a friend together with two project coordinators during the fieldwork (before the project started). Returning to visit as a friend rather than a volunteer, we changed to talk about things in the sense that we wanted to know about each other as friends such as school life of the children, father's job, the change of their house and so on. The *communitas* developed might be transient when compared with that developed among the volunteers, interpreters and project managers, but it did not vanish entirely but existed subtly. This is because such relationship does not exist in our timescale of ordinary life, the community is sustained through the materials such as the house, the toilet, the mangrove trees, and the guitar pick which contains the memory and traces of collectivity and their sense of fulfilment. The encounter and experience in tourism space has

elicited emotional responses (Gibson, 2009), while this mode of being-in is maintained by the ethics of care and 'we' relations created.

The locals did not see the volunteers as outsiders, the others, while the volunteers made themselves become part of the others and gained the sense of belonging, or constructed this community with the local people from the mode of being temporary in proximity to being sustained over distance. Among them, the local project coordinators, local volunteers and interpreters spent most time with the groups, their interactions were most direct and intensity of contact was the highest, resulting in closer relationship. Their interaction was also facilitated by both speaking the same language, either English or Mandarin. Since they spoke the same language, they could share a lot more about themselves and develop a deeper understanding of each other. Therefore, volunteers treated their interpreters and local volunteers (who also acted as interpreters for the Hong Kong group) as friends, friends at a far distance when they are apart. These who used to be the distant others have become 'a group of friends living overseas', as Wendy said, 'I won't feel scared when I am there as I have a group of friends who will help me... I would want to talk to them more often, ask how they are recently' (Interview, 1/3/2017). The relationship with the interpreters and local volunteers did not stop as the project ended; the work relationship has been transformed into friendship. Despite the physical distance, similar to that among the volunteers, they exchanged contacts, chatted on social media, and visited again, trying not to lose the connection. Also because of the shared memories, the experience with great intensity, the interpreters and local volunteers have become part of the team. Gwendolyn talked about her relationship with Dalinh, who was our chief interpreter:

*I will remember I have a nice friend who told me things about Cambodia, and then I will miss her because of this person instead of this organisation or her being our interpreter, it's because of her qualities that I think she's great and I like this friend... we had some great time together, made some jokes, these memories re-emerge because of the person. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

The collective joy they shared reminded them of the experience of doing good together, the relation with the country because of those people they worked together. This moral identity has reinforced the sense of belonging. Further, some volunteers were actively making belonging to the country by emphasising their relation of their body and mind to the country and people, for example, Dawn said 'having been there makes me feel like I am having blood from that country...' (Interview, 26/2/2017).

The volunteers were trying to make themselves recognised by the locals so that this moral community could be growing stronger. When the volunteers arrived, they went to buy the Cambodian-style trousers to get immersed into the local lifestyle. They also learnt some Khmer and gestures for greetings and basic



conversation. Because they spoke the local language and dressed like a local, many villagers were very impressed and delighted or even asked intentionally if the volunteers were Khmer. Of course, nobody really mistook them for locals, but volunteers' efforts and local people's response together reduced the moral distance. This is significant for constructing a heightened experience through the collective joy produced. Especially for the returning volunteers, the sense of familiarity made them act and speak even more like a Cambodian, therefore feeling like part of the local community. This also gave them the sense of recognition as they were not just transients to the local people, as Wendy said 'it's fun when I am recognised as a Cambodian, I feel very happy. It's a sense of recognition, being together, rather than I'm an outsider coming for help. We belong together' (Interview, 1/3/2017). Although Ilsa did not go to the same village for volunteering on her second trip, she visited that village with a few other returning volunteers during the site visit time as project coordinators. As a returning volunteer, she found the sense of familiarity and recognition, and said,

*I'm almost a Cambodian. First, as I learnt some Khmer on the first trip, so once I arrived there this time, I could say Orkun [thank you in Khmer], Bonman [how much], I felt I had been this place before, they could understand what I said and so I could, it felt like very familiar, it's not very strange to me. I knew their practices, the meaning of what they were doing, or what I should do or know, feeling very familiar, especially when I returned to the same place and saw the same people, that feeling was even stronger, and pretty sure it will become stronger. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

Besides the planned outcomes of these trips such as the built house and planted seedlings, belonging and recognition were also embodied through clothing style, adopting local practices, and learning the accent. By doing belonging, they were turning themselves as part of the local community to show their existential importance or value, or they were practising to be recognised as part of the locals so that a moral community between them with ethical relationship could develop and sustain. The moral community in this sense is different from that formed from having a group of people with shared values or interests; being in the community informs the practices, which in turn produces the sense of recognition.

## **5.4 Moral communities and social relationships**

From the above, I have analysed three types of moral communities emerged from an organised service trip or volunteering project, namely moral community among volunteers, moral community of like-minded people, and moral community with the locals. The moral community among volunteers was constructed by the sending organisations and then volunteers made their belonging by following the norms of the community, evolving based on the focal practices of the volunteers. However, the moral distance due to socio-demographic diversity within a moral community cannot always be reduced to the extent that a sense of

community is produced and sought by the volunteers. Different social contexts engineered by the sending organisations and communities formed at the betwixt and between may not be able to overcome too wide a disparity among volunteers so that collectivity and sustainable community out of the temporary community of volunteers could not be fully actualised. A moral community with the locals was formed from active doing of belonging by both sides. While the volunteers engaged the locals, the 'others', in their moral community to gain the sense of recognition, the locals also gave their trust to admit the volunteers to be part of them or bring both into a social relationship. The moral community with like-minded people was consciously created by the volunteers as an expression of inclusion and exclusion. On the one hand, the volunteers built up and expanded the web of relationships by acknowledging membership of the other like-minded people, people of the wider community with shared interests. On the other hand, they differentiated themselves from people whose moral values did not go in line with theirs as they did not receive the recognition as desired. Bellah et al., (1998) conceive a 'good community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community is not about silent consensus, but where the consensus can be challenged and changed – often gradually, sometimes radically – over time' (as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p. 192). These moral communities have actualised this quality of a good community by creating a space in which differences and contradictions are simultaneously enacted, challenged, negotiated and remained. Despite that, these moral communities are still a 'minority' in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Creating these moral communities is one of the active steps in bringing these conflicting values under spotlight and having them being debated, challenged and changed.

A community is a microcosm of wider society. The quest for collectivity and the experience of being in relationship implies there may be such a lack in their everyday life, which is also one of the communitarian critiques – alienation and loss of community – of the current fragmented society. 'Community' touches very deep human aspirations to experience a sense of belonging (Mulligan et al., 2016), while a moral community entails a 'correct' relation with the self, others, and the place. Here, a community is not one-dimensional, static, place-based. The volunteers as the moral subjects being crafted are travelling across different moral worlds to seek their recognition and the lost ties and care between people in the neoliberal times. Social relationships in different moral communities are not just encounters of others but with others. They are more of dialogical than monological (Buber, 1958), as they are engaged in communication and response, a reciprocal relationship. Being dialogical, it means the moral subjects need to feel it and participate by being together with the others they encounter.

Through the interactions, rather than being lost in the collective of the moral community, volunteers are able to seek self-identity, to care and to be cared. Identity is an embodiment of the crafted moral self throughout the process of engaging in group endeavours and in doing good, the state of 'being-alongside'. Having created these moral communities, the volunteers are liberating the various dimensions of the self and are able to open up, engaging in deep and meaningful relationship through intense experience. These moral communities also serve as the collective from which the volunteers find their existence, being the individuals in relation to others, the state of 'being-with'. They also make attempts and active moves to be accepted to these moral communities or feel belonged to, the state of 'being-in'. This explains why simply sending a cheque does not work, as the cheque itself does not embody the encounter, care, belonging and recognition. It is not an input-output equation. The amount of money spent by one volunteer and outcomes that local community get in physical forms could be pretty similar by sending one volunteer over or sending a cheque of the same amount. But what makes the difference here are the social relationships cultivated through growing mangrove seedlings, building the house, and revealing the inner self together.

This I-Thou relationship reconnects people in the fragmented society, rebuilding the lost moral fabrics. This sense of fulfilment is not simply the positive outcomes on the volunteers as summarised in the literature such as adding something on their resume, it probes us to reflect on some of the issues in the contemporary society that social bonding among people is generally perceived to be loose and there is a need to reconnect people. The return to community is to recall the importance of collective endeavour and focal practices, to confront some of the social crises, crisis of identity and social crisis of alienation, and to re-ignite and restore civic engagement (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Voluntary associations play a key role in maintaining civil society in communitarians' view, as people are able to participate in focal practices and move beyond individual benefits and experience to form collective networks (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). These networks embody the reciprocal social relations that builds up the social capital (Siisiainen, 2003; Stebbins, 2001). The *communitas* and the moral relationship helps sustain the moral actions through their experience of focal practices, mutuality and care. The moral lack in the society leads to participation in such moral actions, during which the belonging to moral community, either active or passive, keeps the individuals in the state of 'being-in' leading to more participation. This re-instilling of moral values or ability to interact with people to form web of relationships through values of community such as integration, reciprocity and trust helps us to rethink the moral landscape discussed in the previous chapter.

As highlighted earlier, moral community is not uncritically placed-based community. It is a form of post-place community in which solidarity and shared norms tied people together without a designated locale.

However, place is indeed significant as the place makes the relationship meaningful. Place here is not the locality or home country in traditional notion of community; it is what the volunteers referred to the 'land'. This place becomes important and meaningful after this moral community is formed as it is where all these sorts of physicality and doing belonging take place. As it is a kind of community created and maintained by norms and agreements rather than laws and regulations, it requires continuous doing of belonging and moral relationship, embodied through things brought over, built, left and took, or very ordinary things such as sweat, poop, insects and rotten vegetables which have not been talked about explicitly in the literature. All these constitute collective memories and intense experience of being-alongside, being-with and being-in, the material outcomes or traces of the intangible attachment laid on that 'land'. In addition, people who together experienced the group endeavour, understanding the self and others, and whom the volunteers sought recognition from, also play a key role in making the relationships meaningful and the experience intense. In such social context, together with place and people, moral fulfilment is actualised.

This doing of belonging engages people in social relations which enable and benefit moral selving through taking up moral responsibility and reciprocity. Moral selving does not necessarily emphasise the self. The moral selving process here speaks how the development of the self re-connects the lost moral fabrics in our fragmented society; it is a fulfilment of bettering the social relations and gradually eradicating the social crisis of alienation. In the liminal space of volunteering, the temporal rhythms of living in Cambodia such as walking in the river, weaving a wall of bamboo leaves, drinking coffee, and learning Khmer embody the escape from the everyday pressure and other social problems. The time being on that land creates the right rhythms, positively interrupting the ordinary rhythms. At the aggregation stage, whether this temporal embodiment will be interrupted by the competition and pressure, or sustain to interrupt the ordinary status, mentality and actions and things get re-set, all depends on what the moral relationships will bring to the volunteers and move beyond. The stage of aggregation by returning to the everyday life with a new status offers a useful lens to understand how the moral self is cultivated and experienced with relation to others. The new experience of the self may induce alternative ways of living in different patterns and forms of care, responsibility and obligation. This may have influence on the life-course decisions, together with their past experiences and anticipation of the future (Bowlby, 2012; Turner, 2012), if the volunteering space is effective in bringing out critical reflection and plans of making changes.

## **Chapter 6 Moralising Differently: Potentialities of Volunteer Tourism for Transformation**

In the literature, volunteer tourists have been criticised for their self-interested motivations which impact either the volunteer tourists themselves or the local communities in which they volunteer. In everyday life, volunteers also encounter criticism or even cynicism about them paying to volunteer. Recently, a trend in the literature to investigate the transformative potential of volunteer tourism has been noticed, but further and more systematic exploration on this line of inquiry is to be sought (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). This chapter is attending to this call by unpacking how transformation can be facilitated and what kinds of transformation are possible before concluding that transformation is a definite outcome of travelling as a volunteer. Examining the transformative potential is also useful in understanding the formation of the moral self. This helps to re-evaluate critically the value and potentialities of volunteer tourism as a form of transformative travelling, and moralise it differently by looking at what it reflects. In the following, I firstly review the relationship between transformation and tourism with reference to transmodernity. I then go on to explore different contexts instrumentalised by the relevant organisations which in turn influence the volunteers' experiences. The aim here is to understand the way in which a mind shift could be induced, and the forms of the transformation which take place.

### **6.1 Transmodernity and transformation in/through tourism**

#### **6.1.1 Transmodernity through tourism**

Singh and Singh (2005) suggest that 'all forms of social living are a reflection of prevailing times, and tourism is no exception' (p. 119). Dann (1996) also recognises tourism as a metaphor of the social world. If we acknowledge tourism as the lens of different complex dimensions of the wider society, we may gain some insights by examining the relationship between the growth of volunteer tourism as a form of alternative tourism experiences and the search for meaning.

Ateljevic (2009, 2011) has argued that the current development of tourism manifests a global mind shift. Her argument is developed from her work on the transmodern hopes of tourism potentialities which is situated within an increasing recognition of the world paradigm shift. This shift leads us towards a

transmodern planetary vision in which human beings are beginning to realise and acknowledge that we, both the human and non-human, are all connected as a whole (Ateljevic, 2009, 2011; Ghisi, 2008). Before moving onto the relationship between this paradigm shift and tourism, I seek to give a brief overview of transmodernity.

Transmodernity was first coined in 1989 by the Spanish philosopher Rosa Maria Rodriguez Magda to analyse the trends and consequences of globalisation (Ateljevic, 2013a). It also characterises an epistemological shift towards the knowledge society, through which it highlights a globalised culture of interconnectedness, participation and emancipation (Magda, 2008). Magda (2008), who uses Hegelian logic, alleges that these three paradigms form a dialectic triad that represents a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Magda (2008) posits that transmodernity represents synthesis, as it can be seen as the consequence of modernity as thesis and postmodernity as anti-thesis. The three together form a dialectic triad (Magda, 2004). Transmodernity criticises these previous paradigms on the one hand and acknowledges the necessary subversive progress (post)modernity has brought to us on the other. Transmodernity is thus the synthesis which keeps the best of modernity while moving beyond it (Ghisi, 2008; Magda, 2008). Ghisi (1999, 2008, 2010) adds to this view by referring this new paradigm to a new global consciousness with a planetary view which recognises our interdependencies, vulnerabilities and responsibilities to each other, the natural environment and the planet as a collective living community. Ghisi (2008) further claims that the change towards a new society should be stressed on humanism instead of materialism and consumerism. This speaks of re-enchantment, which was first introduced by Prigogine and Stengers (see Prigogine & Stengers, 1997), that opposes the disenchantment of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that sought objectivity and universalism of knowledge; re-enchantment assumes an interrelatedness of all species (Ghisi, 2008). Ateljevic (2009) thus argues transmodernity ‘opposes the endless economic progress and obsession with material wealth and instead promotes the concept of the quality of life as a measure of progress. This is expressed in the form of the knowledge economy, which moves emphasis from material capital to intangible assets and the nourishment of human capital’ (p. 284).

Social and global crises such as wars, climate change, social alienation, growing wealth gap, heightening individual feelings of pressure and anxieties have marked the characteristics of the so-called ‘post-9/11 world’ (Ateljevic, 2009). Ateljevic (2013a) has noticed that ‘at the level of public discourse, the questions and “solutions” are often still framed within the existing (modern) economic and political framework, which sees rationality, money and technology as the most dominant measures of progress and human development’ (p. 38). As outlined in Chapter 2, people are responsibilised to resolve problems which were hitherto

government's agenda, while social ties are getting loose as people become more alienated. It has been argued that 'humanity needs (and is actually going through) a major global mind change and paradigm shift' (Ateljevic, 2013a, p. 38; see also Ghisi, 2008; Magda, 2008). As Tannock (1995) explains, when individuals encounter certain negative events, they might overcome by turning to the past to avoid, escape, criticise or mobilise themselves. Such events can be exemplified by a loss of identity, lack of agency, or the sense of absence of community in an uncertain global world. It is argued that postmodernity provides a necessary deconstruction of the modernity paradigm but does not lead to a solution or way forward (Ateljevic, 2013b; Magda, 2008). Transmodernity, on the contrary, offers a new way of thinking 'from the edge of chaos into a new order of society' (Sardar, 2004, p. 2; as cited in Ateljevic, 2011). This paradigm advocates moving forward to something rather than moving away from something (Pritchard et al., 2011).

The rise of alternative tourism, or what Ateljevic (2009) terms 'special interest tourisms' (p. 293), reflects the changing consciousness of the ever growing tourist populations. Tourists are increasingly seeking more meaningful experiences, or experiences which help them search for meanings and new perspectives. A growing need for transformative and conscious travel, particularly to find the means to change one's life(style) and the impacts on the destinations, has been seen, from which various terminologies such as transmodern tourism of the future, transformative tourism or conscious tourism have emerged (Ateljevic & Tomljenovic, 2016). Živoder, Ateljevic, and Corak (2015) have distinguished between transmodern or conscious tourists and transformative tourists in the sense that the former are 'grounded in the wider socio-cultural and political context of the world paradigm shift and thus transcends the isolationist approach to tourism studies' while the concept of 'transformative tourists' termed by Reisinger (2013) emerges from the confines of tourism (p. 73). Transformative tourism taps into the 'potential of the travel experience to alter long-term thinking with a particular interest in how tourism can be used to bring about social change and delivers ideals such as sustainable living and development' (Živoder et al., 2015, p. 73). Thus, transmodern or conscious tourism re-shapes the tourism as well as social and political systems while transformative tourism focuses on re-shaping the tourists under such paradigm shift.

Regardless of the terminologies, this direction extends beyond the simple search for responsible travel. Responsible tourism, defined at the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism in 2002, encourages both the tourism industry and tourists to take up more responsibilities to minimise negative impacts, make more positive contributions to local communities, and show more respecting for the local culture. Transmodern/conscious/transformative tourists take it further to re-invent themselves and the world through travelling. Ateljevic and Tomljenovic (2016) have summarised an array of characteristics of these tourists:

‘they travel in order to volunteer and make a difference; they value what’s slow, small and simple and aim for self-reliance; they are connected and communicative; they seek meaningful experiences that help them to develop personally and collectively. In sum, they use travel to reflect upon their lives and get the courage to make crucial life changes upon their return back home, not only in terms of their lifestyle but also the type of work they do’ (p. 28). However, transformation of worldview and lifestyle does not happen simply by travelling. Given these characteristics, the critical questions are: how is transformation of worldview and the world made possible through the travelling experience? What kinds of transformation does it entail? Zwagemaker (2014) has noted that it is still debatable whether the proposed global shift of human consciousness towards transmodernity is a reality. This is because the proposal and debate has still remained at a philosophical level as a framework with a handful of empirical studies (e.g. Methorst, 2011; Ruiter, 2010; Živoder et al., 2015; Zwagemaker, 2014), although there have been increasing studies on transformative potential of tourism<sup>7</sup>. I reckon that it is useful to examine these two questions so as to reflect what is exactly manifested by tourism, as in both the paradigm and tourism studies.

### 6.1.2 Transformative learning and tourism

In order to examine how transformation takes place and the types which can be elicited, a more systematic approach is needed to review the process instead of only looking at reported changes. Transformative learning theory offers a useful lens to review the (re)working of the self through the volunteer tourism experience.

What would ‘transformative’ mean in transformative tourism? Transformation has been primarily discussed in education theory in relation to transformative learning in earlier time. Transformative learning theory was originally developed by Mezirow (1991) as a new approach to adult learning that explains the shifts in one’s assumptions and worldview, with the echoes of Freire’s conscientisation process and principles of emancipatory action of Habermas’s three domains of learning. Transformative learning is the process of specifically effecting changes in our frames of reference, bases on which our expectations, cognitions, perceptions and feelings are shaped and delimited, and sources of our action (Mezirow, 1991, 1996, 1997, 2003). A frame of reference consists of two dimensions: habits of mind and a point of view. Habits of mind are ‘broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes’. Point of view is ‘the constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation’ (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5-6). These frames of reference sometimes could

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<sup>7</sup> For example, Yvette Reisinger has edited two books on this theme, titled *Transformational tourism: Tourist perspectives* and *Transformational tourism: Host perspectives*.



be problematic, taken-for-granted such as what Mezirow (2003) summarises ‘fixed interpersonal relationships, political orientations, cultural bias, ideologies, schemata, stereotyped attitudes and practices, occupational habits of mind, religious doctrine, moral-ethical norms’ (p. 59). This somehow echoes what are inculcated into the habitus. The key to transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference is to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions, learning how ‘to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others’ (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). In other words, this change is a result of confrontation with information that disrupts our meaning perspectives which are a combination of epistemic, sociolinguistic, psychological, moral-ethical, philosophical and aesthetic factors (Mezirow, 1991, 1997). Due to this confrontation, we are learning to construct and appropriate new and revised interpretations of meaning of different encounters. This process consists of a three-dimensional change, namely 1) psychological (deeper understanding of the self), 2) convictional (beliefs and entire ideologies), and 3) behavioural (specific behaviours and lifestyles) (Mezirow, 1996). These three dimensions, to a certain extent, respond and also lead to the harmony of the body, mind and spirit which people care about in the transmodern paradigm. There are 10 proposed steps in achieving transformation (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22):

- 1) A disorienting dilemma
- 2) A self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
- 3) A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
- 4) Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
- 5) Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
- 6) Planning of a course of action
- 7) Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans
- 8) Provisional trying of new roles
- 9) Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
- 10) A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s perspective.

In contrast to Mezirow’s psychocritical perspective, O’Sullivan (2002) defines transformative learning with a focus on a more sustainable lifestyle through ‘experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world’ (p. 11). Taylor (2008) has also suggested that three components of transformative learning are important during the process, including self-reflection, engaging in dialogues with others, and intercultural experiences. One common component of these various conceptions of transformative learning is

critical self-reflection which leads to changes in the frames of reference. This then highlights the importance of discourse which, as Mezirow (1997) explains, is 'a dialogue devoted to assessing reasons presented in support of competing interpretations, by critically examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view' for meaning-making (p. 6). In learning theory, there is a need to recognise short-term objectives and long-term goals, which are to be achieved through instrumental learning and communicative learning respectively (Mezirow, 1997). This could help us understand the instrumentalisation of service obligation in schools in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and how the service-learning approach could be further developed into communicative learning to achieve the long-term goal. Discourse with others in a different or new culture is the medium through which transformation is promoted and effected (Taylor, 2008), which would lead to a perspective transformation when the 'unfamiliar' experiences help to question the 'familiar' everyday situations and practices (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Mezirow, 1997). A perspective transformation, according to Mezirow (1997), usually occurs when the individual experiences cumulative transformed meaning schemes or acute crisis which cause them to question the very core of their existence. This echoes the idea of cathartic experience in tourism context first explicitly discussed by Zahra and McIntosh (2007).

Catharsis is a result of emotional release from witnessing or experiencing tragic events which 'lead to a moral influence on the person that is later transferred into virtuous action' (Aristotle, 1962; as cited in Zahra & McIntosh, 2007, p. 115). Catharsis can be defined as psychological relief through strong emotional expressions, the way of liberating one's feelings as I have discussed in the previous chapter (Section 5.2.3.1). Furthermore, cathartic experiences in the context of volunteer tourism 'facilitate positive changes and make a positive difference to an individual's relationship and purpose in life' (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007, p. 115). Such experiences have been overlooked in previous volunteer tourism studies, but evidenced in the growing interests in alternative tourism and meaningful experiences gained by volunteer tourists (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Wearing, 2001). This change in behaviour, lifestyles and perceived meaning of life brings us back to the idea of transformative tourism or conscious tourism. In the context of volunteer tourism, the focus on a shift in an individual's frame of reference will benefit from the change of physical space outside the realm of everyday life, and encountering and engaging in dialogue with others is directly related to disorienting dilemma of Mezirow's 10-step framework. Cranton (1994) also suggests that transformative learning may be experienced through a 'prolonged period of confusion and muddling that is followed by a breakthrough or sense of enlightenment' (p. 72). This echoes the state of the tourist at the aggregate stage of change in the notion of liminality. This stage of bridging back to the ordinary with a new status could be extended beyond the end of the travelling experience. This highlights the significance of reviewing the relationship between travelling and transformation beyond the timeframe of travelling.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the transformative learning theory has been applied in understanding specifically volunteer tourism among many other forms of alternative tourism in very recent years (e.g. Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Hammersley, 2014; Knollenberg et al., 2014). As Coghlan and Gooch (2011) review applying the transformative learning framework, they found the insufficiency of existing volunteer tourism programmes in incorporating the two steps – ‘planning of a course of action’ and ‘provisional trying of new roles’, which are believed to be useful in moving volunteer tourism beyond the rhetoric of ‘doing something good’ to more life-changing or transformational changes to the participants and wider community of people. Hammersley (2014) also extends the conversation by arguing the importance of structural opportunities for both pre-trip preparation and post-trip debriefing of volunteers. These processes facilitate transformation to develop, during which the expedition leaders would play a key role in providing support through the process of disorienting dilemma or effecting changes in the frames of reference (Taylor, 2008). These provide the basis to further examine how transformation can be actualised in the case of volunteer tourism.

In the following, I am examining the potential of volunteer tourism in transforming volunteers’ frames of reference, and if so, how and what kind of transformation takes place. I am using Mezirow’s framework of transformative learning primarily, while also ideas from O’Sullivan (2002) and Taylor (2008) as they supplement the framework with more dimensions of looking at changes.

## 6.2 A context for reflection

*After this trip, for myself, I want to develop... become more mature and think from more perspectives, more critical instead of just taking from what is written on books or told on TV.  
(Bella, Interview, 20/1/2017)*

Transforming the worldview of the participants of volunteer tourism has been claimed to be one of the significant impacts on the volunteers (Wearing, 2001). Knollenberg et al. (2014) have found that voluntourists (the group motivated by both travelling and volunteering features of volunteer tourism) had higher expectations of components of transformative learning from a volunteer tourism experience, but in general not all participants expected or even wanted to experience it. Among my informants, similarly, only some of them expected to have some sorts of transformational experience or outcome.

A context for critical self-reflection is a key component of transformative learning, in which the individuals learn to recognise uncritically acceptable ideologies in their everyday life (Brookfield, 2009) – a change in their frames of reference (Mezirow, 1997). An intercultural experience is needed in order for the self-reflection and dialogue with others to have a meaning during the transformative learning process (Taylor,

2007). This results from leaving the familiar to allow the unfamiliar to be encountered, engaged in, and creating a shock or change on the individuals. This is directly related to the first three phases of Mezirow's transformative learning – experiencing a disorienting dilemma, a self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame, and a critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions. Meanwhile, this context of reflection and discussion was lacking in volunteers' daily life, as the informants flagged up, so it became unique and necessary. As mentioned in previous chapters, people do not express their feelings explicitly especially in Asian culture, or do not have much interaction with one another in contemporary society in general. Their assumptions and perceptions are taken for granted or not called into question. Therefore, volunteer tourism provides a specific context of space, time and audience for the participants to engage in disorienting dilemma and introspection. These contexts either naturally emerged during social interactions or created by the sending organisation staff as part of the programme.

### 6.2.1 Imagining the worst

*I was expecting even worse, no electricity, no electrical appliances, mobile phones not working, or no electricity to sustain it even though working, I also expected food to be worse, and shower and toilet more primitive (Quinn, Interview, 26/1/2017)*

Prior to the trip, volunteers had already formed preconceptions of the experiences. Most volunteers had the expectations of living in a very harsh environment, or that the living conditions of the country in general were very adverse and unfavourable. They had an expectation about the scarcity of resources – especially in the village perceived not to have utility services, a proper shelter, and that the food might make them ill. Other pre-trip concerns also include the fear of not being able to carry out their daily routines such as washing hair. Despite these expectations, they did not tell much about their service trip to others, partly because they might be afraid of being criticised for paying a lot of money to places perceived to be dangerous, dirty and underdeveloped. Informants have expressed their fear of their expectations, imaginations, or identity from the moral community being ruined by talking too much about their plans or the place prior to the trip. Indeed, evidence has shown that others' perception of Cambodia had either influenced the volunteers' impressions of the destination or resulted in an initial shock upon arrival. For example, Adam's family thought 'Cambodia was chaotic, very dirty... or some political unrest, it's dangerous, [they were] afraid that I would catch any diseases or infections' (Interview, 24/1/2017). Predisposed with these images of Cambodia, when they arrived, they were undergoing a process of disorienting dilemma, more of the convictional dimension of the transformation.

At the briefing session and pre-trip workshops, the Hong Kong volunteers had heard about some information about Phnom Penh and the two respective sites they were visiting. Upon arrival in Phnom Penh, the intensity of shock was not great probably because it was the capital city, which they thought it looked like a secondary city in China with some Western architectural relics. When the Hong Kong-Team A reached the Trapeang Sangke Community, we started our first ‘village’ experience of the trip. Due to the rainstorm, our minibus was stuck in the swampy road after sending us to the village. The driver, local team leader, a few villagers, and all volunteers were gathering to rescue the situation. Everyone helped to push the minibus when the driver was pressing the pedal, Ethan and Helen were thinking of the angle of placing a piece of wood to help accelerate (their team designed the game of making a toy car with the children), while some others were lighting up the surroundings with their mobile phones. When the minibus moved forward, Jasmine, who was pushing from the back fell on her stomach and her whole body was soaked into the muddy water. Everyone burst out laughing. What made the group so happy was that this was the very first time during the trip that they had their feet in the mud pushing a car which was extraordinary to their everyday experience in Hong Kong. This ruralness which otherwise was perceived as a low *suzhi* became something they cherished. Still, the ruralness of this village was not enough of a shock to some of them. Florence said,

*although I am living in where I can see cows [the New Territories in Hong Kong] ...I think there was not too rural, not as rural as I expected. What I imagined about ruralness was that I would need to get water from the well and use a scoop to pour water from head to clean our body, and toilet would be much more primitive like those we saw during home visit. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

Like some other volunteers, Florence got those ideas from the media, especially portrayal of such scenes in the fundraising advertisements on TV from international NGOs. Trapeang Sangke Community has been developed into an ecotourism site; therefore it is well-furbished with bungalows, toilets and shower rooms built of cement and bricks, and other facilities such as a library/reading corner and two spacious dining areas. Living in such environment on a service trip made them think about the nature of a service trip and the practices of volunteers. One volunteer posted on Instagram a photo of herself lying on a hammock with the surrounding environment in the background, captioning ‘service trip’, and another photo showing the darkened bottom of her feet again with the sunset, river and bungalows as the backdrop and the caption ‘these dirty feet dayzzzzZZZZzz’. Because of the nice environment, or because of the guilt of staying in such a nice environment as a volunteer, it seems that the volunteers tended to put a ‘tag of ethics’ on their experience and wanted this to be seen explicitly and publicly. She captioned the photo with ‘service trip’ partly because she received messages asking if that was really a ‘service trip’ after she posted a short clip showing herself sunbathing on a hammock during the preparation trip (one week before the actual trip). This could be an

internal self-examination with feelings of guilt, as this lack of shock was indeed challenging their assumptions, either long inscribed in their frames of reference or temporarily lingered in their mind from how others reacted to their decision of volunteering in Cambodia. This 'ethics tag' was a way to shift the focus to highlight what they were doing was tough work despite the bungalows and river view, hoping to tell the right story or make the narrative appropriate.

Tanoun Village in which the Hong Kong-Team B were staying for 10 days, on the other hand, was quite rural and primitive. The volunteers worked mainly in the local primary school and slept in their own sleeping bags in its office which was temporarily turned into accommodation. When they were asked to bring a sleeping bag, they had already imagined the worst which was sleeping in a tent outdoor and having mosquitoes flying around all the time, thus having a mosquito net was almost like a blessing to them. Melanie in Project B shared what her expectations were and how she thought about having mosquito net as well as mosquito bites.

*I did not expect to have accommodation in a covered area, although it's fine to me. We got a room with door and windows, I was expecting to sleep in my sleeping bag on the grass like camping... I was very fine to such conditions as having insects everywhere and high temperature. Although I got bitten by many insects, I was not worried about that, it's quite serious though. We got mosquito nets but some of them were broken, so I got many mosquito bites on my legs. But I was really fine with it, I expected this to be normal. (Interview, 20/1/2017)*

If they were at home, they would never need to sleep in a sleeping bag, or they could turn on air-conditioning when it was hot. Although she said she was fine with it, it still matters. What matters here is not that she got bitten by mosquitoes despite having the nets; rather, the felt experiences matter. Although it was not as rough as they expected, it was the experience that let them know how a lifestyle in a Cambodian village looked like. This did not seem to be a shock to Melanie as she expected this kind of living condition to be normal, but it was this felt experience during the whole service trip that let her see what has been depicted on such as the media or books. It was a confrontation with the actual situation or experience that disrupted her meaning perspectives. Due to this confrontation, she was put in a context to construct and appropriate new interpretations of meaning of encounters during the trip.

### 6.2.2 Experiencing dilemma

The volunteers fell into dilemmas from how they perceived local resources and their ways and feelings of using them. After the pre-trip sharing by previous TBW participants working in Tanoun Village, the volunteers got prepared for having limited resources especially water for their daily use. The volunteers heard about the story of how to take a shower the year before: the toilet which could be used as shower room was

full of insects flying around at night and the water in the vats was muddy, therefore they either did not take shower every day or took it outdoor with limited water. This time, Ona, a returning volunteer to the same village, experienced a dilemma and feeling of guilt when she saw three big vats of clean water prepared exclusively for the volunteers. She and a few other volunteers had the dilemma of whether they should wash their hair every day partly because three vats of clean underground water were very precious in the dry January in Cambodia. Meanwhile, washing hair was so ordinary that they did it every single day in Hong Kong without questioning the need or the constraint of doing it. Coincidentally, one of their activities was to promote hygiene education and ways of preventing head lice. She said,

*I did question about it, like Cambodians do not wash their hair every day but Hong Kong people can't stand with it. We had 10 people, there were three vats of water outside, they kept refilling the vats for us with underground water, I wondered if that would cause much harm to them as they do not have enough clean water resources, I am not sure about that, but we used a lot of their water for shower, and seems we did not really treasure the water, splash a huge scoop of water to wash our hands, did not care how much we used. (Interview, 18/1/2017)*

On the same issue, Selina, who was also a returning volunteer to the village, felt that they were using the clean water more responsibly by adjusting their practices. She said,

*when we arrived, we saw about three vats of water. You know, we 10 people, based on how much water we use for shower usually in Hong Kong, we would use a lot of their water, regardless of the amount used for cooking and washing up. I saw everyone was alert of this issue, trying not to use that much or not taking shower for that long, as long as the body got wet and cleaned, trying to use the minimal, especially girls with long hair, we just did it quickly without using a lot of water. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

Both Ona and Selina experienced guilt but negotiated in different ways. Ona was undergoing a time of self-questioning based on the practical local situation; clean underground water was limited in dry season while the temporary stay of 10 people had consumed a lot of the water that elicited Ona's guilt. On the other hand, Selina looked at the relative conditions and practices. Of course, they could not take shower or wash hair under unlimited supply of running water from the shower head as how they did back home. The way of negotiating this guilt from what she did and observed was to speed it up so as to use less water, as informed by dispositions in their habitus. Therefore, Selina thought that they were alert and adjusted accordingly in a relative sense that they used less water than their usual practice at home rather than the absolute sense that they decided not to take shower because of the scarcity.

Similarly, Hong Kong-Team A experienced the awakening point when taking shower in the Trapeang Sangke Community. Because it was an ecotourism site, they had big water tanks collecting rainwater and underground water to supply for the tourists. After the sharing from previous volunteers, they also expected the worst that

they would not have any water until they saw a good flow of water from the shower heads, otherwise they would just use towel to wipe and clean their body as Kathleen planned to. During the middle of their stay, they realised the water tanks were almost empty when the shower started to be dripping. Again, several of them did it more quickly or splashed two scoops of water from the bucket just to make themselves feel they had taken a shower, instead of not taking a shower. When they went back to Phnom Penh and then home, they noticed the huge difference in terms of the amount of water they could get from the shower which they had taken it for granted in their everyday life. Without these felt experiences, they would not have known or even questioned whether they had used more of the water than necessary, and other issues such as the resources in other places and their practices in an unfamiliar context. The ordinary shower became extraordinary when they had observed the amount of water used differed. Ona, Selina and Kathleen all had experienced a self-examination with feelings of guilt. As they further questioned their assumptions, such as towards the use of water, in their everyday life, they showed a bit more critical self-assessment along the process of transformative learning, although whether transformation took place or was taking place still requires further exploration.

Many of the informants voiced that they wanted to get immersed into the local lives, have an experience of doing what the locals usually do, through which they could learn and understand some local cultures and practices. Particularly in the village, they were sitting on the mats on the floor or on the stones under some trees to eat even though ants were crawling around, or like what Gwendolyn said, 'if we are now in India, when they eat with hands, I will definitely not ask for chopsticks... what they do, how they do, I do the same, I won't want to do in my own ways' (Interview, 3/3/2017). However, their practices just could not be changed in a very short period of time as they had had a particular set of codes in doing things. Ona remembered once the feeling of guilt when they were cooking. She said,

*they [the villagers] still ate the potatoes even though they were rotten, but we didn't. We threw the vegetables away if the leaves got slightly rotten or what, sometimes when they looked at us cooking, they would feel strange as we threw away things which were edible to them while Hong Kong people thought they were not edible. (Interview, 18/1/2017)*

What interests us here is the prevailing sense of guilt. This was the usual way of handling rotten potatoes at home that did not incur any guilt of wasting food before they went to Cambodia, but this sense of guilt emerged having seen how the locals did, and it got stronger when the local people were around which also worried them about their representation in front of the locals. Same as using water, this was so different from how they would do it in Hong Kong that they were put into a situation of re-examining their practices from the convictional and behavioural dimensions. The volunteers were bounded by criteria of moral judgement



which were already in place from their everyday life and also within their community of volunteers (as discussed in Chapter 5), making them evaluate what they did. Their ordinary ethics was then challenged by another set of moral codes in this ‘other’ place of different cultures and different level of development. Ona was more concerned about the amount of water they used and waste they created with reference to the local lifestyle and actual scarcity of resources, while Selina did not feel the same guilt because she focused more on the behavioural change according to the context, resulting in different intensity of guilt. Either way, transformation is promoted or effected through dialogue with others or encountering a different culture, during which the ‘unfamiliar’ experience helped to question the ‘familiar’ everyday situations and practices, such as taking shower and handling rotten vegetables in this example. The emotional responses such as guilt and shame prompt challenges to the taken-for-granted frames of reference.

### 6.2.3 Searching for meanings of life

*I think, we know ourselves the best if we are happy or not, whether it's the way of living we like, whether we want to make any changes... volunteering allows us to think from different perspectives and re-adjust ourselves, maybe you can find the true self, find the way you feel happy and comfortable. (York, Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Indeed, the experience was remarkable not only because they were put in a place where things were insufficient, but also what was extraordinary in their everyday life became so ordinary in the village when their everyday pace was disrupted. It was also because they were being there, seeing and feeling what was written on books or travel blogs, as a few informants said, which gave them new insights and possibly transformation on their perspectives. A change of physical space outside their realm of everyday life could open up modes of being in the world. Like what Quinn explained,

*what I treasure, besides that...as you won't take shower outdoor in Hong Kong, is that you won't often have the opportunity to gather a group of friends and cook together, and wash up dishes together, then take shower in groups, living that can only be experienced there. (Interview, 26/1/2017)*

This was the experience of being-with a group of volunteers free from everyday persona as well as a taste of the local lifestyle; it was also the exploration of different ways of being by slowing down the pace of life and going back to the basics. These enabled the volunteers to enjoy lives in the simplest form. In the village, some of the Hong Kong-Team A volunteers went kayaking during their free time between tasks of the day and also stargazing at night. They also engaged in things that they usually could not or would not do back home such as taking shower outdoor, cooking for a group of 10 people, or idling for an afternoon. In the literature, these were the sort of activities of volunteer tourism that made no contribution to the local community but just for

fun. However, the connections among tourism, fun and learning have been neglected in the volunteer tourism literature (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, & Benckendorff, 2012). As Sin et al. (2015) have reminded us, it is almost impossible to separate or extract pleasure from the analysis of actual volunteer tourism experiences, as it is clearly highly aesthetic and not pleasure-free when viewed as a form of ethical tourism. These terms should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, although they have been treated as such, in order to reconcile this responsibility and pleasure, ethics and aesthetics. Further from this, I argue that this constitutes a specific geography that is conducive for changes through tourism and learning in which we do not see volunteer tourists only as global citizens who are always responsible, compassionate and committed. It was the leisure or idle time during which the volunteers critically reflected on their lifestyles by going through the process of negotiating their purposes, values, feelings and meanings. For example, Gloria from time to time talked about her search for meaning and purpose by taking up new challenges to explore possibilities, having dialogues with others and introspecting during her own time. We had several deep talks about lifestyles in different countries, our attitudes towards others' views on us, and how to strike a balance between expectations and self-satisfaction. She said,

*I had given a lot of time to myself to calm down during the trip, I felt I was living in the moment. Although I haven't found out what I want to do or how I want myself to look like, I got the time to settle... (Personal communication on the coach, 15/1/2017)*

*... I felt like their living is very leisurely, seems they just do what they need to do each day, or they focus on only one thing every day, for instance we saw an elderly peeling off shells of peanuts for seeding, she was still doing it on our way back, she focused on doing one thing. (Interview, 23/1/2017)*

Gloria was jealous of that elderly, or the local people in general, that they were leading a simple lifestyle, which was exactly missing in volunteers' daily life so that they quested for, as many volunteers agreed. The rhythms and temporal suspension of the everyday moral codes helped to put a pause to all sorts of stress, competition, frustrations and other problems, as I discussed about liminality in the previous chapter. This temporal escape from their fast-paced everyday also allowed them to enjoy the tranquillity of the natural environment and the slow-living style of the villagers, making them think about what they used to do back home, the purposes of doing those things and whether they could feel from what they used to be doing by the pace they did things. By observing how local people live or knowing how the villagers in the Trapeang Sangkae Community teamed up to protect their natural environment, volunteers reflected on how much happiness and enjoyment they could get from this very simple lifestyle, from which they were trying to find a different pace of living, although sometimes they might not be conscious of this process of critical reflection. When the difference or contrast becomes bigger and more obvious, the conscious negotiation of different

temporalities that constitute their everyday life led them to reflect on and possibly look for alternative practices in their daily life (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012). Appreciating and embracing a slow life as lived experience within their otherwise 'fast world' opens up ways of being through re-conceptualisation of time in their everyday life. This interruption of the pace of the 'fast world' allows them to reflect and re-invent themselves during the course of an ethical action (volunteering in this context), possibly leading to plans of action for change if the 'exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions' (Mezirow, 2000) was positive and productive.

In contrast to a tranquil lifestyle, cathartic experiences also triggered volunteers to think about the meaning of life. As discussed in previous chapter, the *communitas* among volunteers and that between volunteers and local people provided a safe and inclusive space for liberating emotions and the authentic self. Besides building and maintaining the relationship within the community, such cathartic experiences 'facilitate positive changes and make a positive difference to an individual's relationship and purpose in life' (McIntosh & Zahra, 2007, p. 115). The farewell dinner of the Hong Kong-Team B was one of these experiences that volunteers were drawn to deeply think about the meanings of life. At the dinner, one of the part-time teachers of the local school shared her personal stories from her study and sickness, to her family situations and pressure from being forced to work in another country. Through the psychological relief by that girl, the volunteers were so emotionally engaged that they were all crying and revealing more about themselves. This relief did not only make an impact on the emotional expressions by everyone at the dinner, but also the subsequent introspection over what it meant by what she said. Melanie recalled a moment when that girl felt lost in what she was doing, what she was living or struggling for. This had hit her in the way that she was prompted to re-think her meanings of life, her future career as a teacher, and how she could do it better.

Both the change of environment and cathartic experiences provided a great intensity of encounters that resulted in disorienting dilemmas and critical self-reflections. This implies a unique and interesting geography of where and how disorientation and critical reflection take place, which resonates with what Crossley (2012) stated that "moral redemption is performed by volunteer tourists as a spatial practice, involving travel to spaces charged with enough potency, in terms of extremes of poverty, to bring about the transition to an 'appreciative' state of mind" (p. 244). The sense of guilt or shame induced during the encounters has not been discussed explicitly and sufficiently in previous studies on volunteer tourism. The feelings of guilt or shame partly came from the privilege of the volunteers and these induced feelings had something to do with the presentation of the self in front of the locals, which is similar to what Simpson (2004) and Crossley (2012) have found. Nevertheless, such encounters were more intense in stimulating the changes in volunteers'

mindsets because they were not there to see how bad the living conditions in Cambodia were or how grim and miserable local people's lives were, like general mass tourism or other alternative tourism such as slum tourism usually intend to do. They were not there either to observe poverty and make them feel 'lucky' and show greater appreciation for what they have got back home (Simpson, 2004). The 'appreciation' by the Hong Kong and Taiwanese volunteers was not the 'ethical end', as Crossley (2012) suggested from her study on Western volunteer tourists, that allowed them to return home in the knowledge that they had undergone a person transformation but with the same lifestyle. Although the volunteers' lifestyles were challenged by the local way of handling with rotten vegetables or slow living, this challenge and thus the binary of 'us and them' was not solely based on the social inequality or comparison of material conditions. It was also due to the way of doing things and relative moral codes in this liminal space that induced the sense of guilt and shame, which was different from the kind of 'appreciation' or even guilt-free found on Western volunteer tourists (Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004). Thus, it was the travel from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the hustle and bustle to the calm and simple, or from the highly socially alienated to the deeply engaged and connected that made them shocked or awakened, becoming more conscious of dimensions of their life which had long been ignored or suppressed in their daily life. These encounters resulted in them having deeper understanding of the self, questioning their beliefs and ideologies, as well as reflecting on their everyday behaviours and lifestyles.

### **6.3 Disorientation and re-orientation by sending organisations**

*I don't really do this [serious discussion about issues] in my daily life. Especially after sharing, I have gained more perspectives or thoughts, very different, I seldom have this experience of gathering together and sharing about our thoughts or feelings deep inside our heart, also because people don't have the time. (Erica, Interview, 2/3/2017)*

Travelling to a new, unfamiliar environment and interacting with others enabled the self-reflection to take place, consciously or unconsciously, after putting the ways of thinking, values, attitudes and beliefs into question and disrupting our meaning perspectives. Meanwhile, the sending organisations were trying to make sure the ethics of the trips was more pronounced, although not necessarily a form of virtue signalling. In addition, these activities or contexts instrumentalised by the sending organisations could also be seen as tools for disorienting dilemma, introspecting, and re-orienting for changes. In this section, I am discussing how sending organisations created or made use of contexts in facilitating critical self-reflection and various dimensions of transformation.

### 6.3.1 Eating with a theme

Eating on a service trip serves to bring up issues of what volunteers can or should do by understanding the local situations and thus acting responsibly. The volunteer tourism space offers a temporal space in which contexts and situations are out there for volunteers to encounter and experience dilemma and negotiation of guilt and shame such as the example of handling rotten potatoes. Sending organisations, at the same time, instrumentalise the volunteers to experience in the contexts chosen by the organisations and more actively and directly act on their frames of reference. This could also be an attempt to even off a bit of their guilt from using water and handling food by these more ethical acts of eating. Both organisations assigned a theme to eating out in Cambodia. On the first day upon arrival at Phnom Penh, the Hong Kong volunteers were divided into groups of five and each group was given US\$2.5 for lunch to experience having a tight budget as many local people were. They were brought to the old market where local people go for street food or other cheap options. Through this simulation, the TBW staff wanted them to have a taste of poverty and struggle of living on a daily income of US\$5 similar to many people who have been earning less than the minimum wage of US\$153 per month. Being put in such a setting of poor conditions and eating food that the volunteers had never seen or could not tell what it was, Adam said,

*the first impression was that the market looked very dirty, flies over fish, the owners did not bother to drive them away, just too many, but I wanted to try, local food, so we sat down and ordered, it was so delicious, instant noodles. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

This shows the attempt of the sending organisations trying to package the itinerary with authentic local places and everyday practices for the volunteers to gain a sense of the poverty issues in the country. Despite the flies and dirty environment, it was all these that made it alternative, exclusive and premium as the encounter was more intense and direct. The volunteers had heard or seen depictions of similar scenes on the media or books, but this simulation gave them the felt experience of seeing, doing and feeling it, and through which they were brought into discussion and reflection on their experiences at the first debriefing. This was one of the themes they had started brainstorming and discussing at the pre-trip sessions which, to a certain extent, helped to negotiate some of their assumptions.

With a contrasting style for a similar purpose, ELIV scheduled meals in charity-themed restaurants that at the same time highlighted food hygiene and safety. Thus, the cuisines we had were not entirely 'local', including Khmer, Chinese, Indian, French, American and International. Before each project team arrives, the team leader and local Project Manager need to look for restaurants associated with a charity, mainly local ones with the vision and philosophy that ELIV supports. For example, we had a dinner in Café Joe to Go, of which all

the profits go to Global Children, a local NGO-operated school to provide art training to former street working children, while the restaurant was decorated with their artworks which could also be purchased by customers. Although we were served with two traditional dishes (Amok and Lok Lak), the focus was on the issues in Cambodia and the work done by these charity organisations and social enterprises. Another dinner in New Leaf Eatery was of the same purpose. This restaurant was a social enterprise opened by two foreigners after their volunteering experience with the aim of giving back, and their vision is ‘to support education in Siem Reap province, through profits generated by being a high quality dining experience that offers a “taste of Cambodia”’ (New Leaf Eatery, n.d.). Entering the restaurant, it was well-decorated with some handicrafts made of bamboos; volunteers were served with a lot of food which the team leader said it was of French style attributed to the colonial legacy (Figure 14a & b). Although some volunteers mentioned that we were provided with more than enough, we were directed to look at the displays and products near the entrance as they were handmade by local artists or groups with a cause. Having this purpose of engaging volunteers in the contexts of different issues which the organisation intended to bring up, however, the volunteers did not show any particular sense of guilt of eating in a pricey restaurant full of foreign customers, as long as they were eating in a restaurant for a good cause. Interestingly, none of the volunteers posted any photo about that dinner, as some of us asked, ‘don’t we eat too well?’ Although this restaurant was more touristy than the standard Chinese restaurant where we went three times during the trip, eating for a good cause managed to maintain the ‘ethics tag’ of the service trip. This absence of photos on social media could possibly embody the sense of guilt which may be negotiated at the same time with the causes supported by the restaurants. This negotiation and embodiment of guilt was similar to that of the volunteer who posted photos of sunbathing on hammock and dirty feet but with a tag of ‘service trip’ (see Section 6.2.1). What marked the difference was, instead of adding a ‘tag of ethics’, these Taiwanese volunteers avoided any possibility of scepticism. Their self-examination at the same time self-justification were implicitly embedded in order not to disrupt the existing ethical narratives. Although the themes of these dinners were covered at de-briefing sessions, there might be a risk that these acts of eating ethically tend to be rationalised instead of being encountered naturally.



Figure 14a & b Interior of New Leaf Eastery and the food served

### 6.3.2 Visiting not like a tourist

*Before going to the village, we went to S-21 and Killing Field which were the two places I wanted to go to know about their history, plus there was nothing I wanted to buy, so I didn't really want to be a tourist. (Selina, Interview, 24/1/2017)*

Both trips involved visits to different touristic spots, both the must-sees in Cambodia and less traditional ones. Again, each visit was characterised with a theme. Before going to the villages, TBW arranged the tour to S-21 and Killing Field which were the sites of the Cambodian genocide during the Khmer Rouge Regime and now turned into museums. Through this, volunteers were expected to have some background understanding of the country and dialogues about the genocide, the government, social issues and the emotions carried on from the Pol Pot era. Viewing the museums like many other tourists did, the debriefing was an addition to the ordinary packaged tours or solo travelling. After the museum visits, the volunteers tended to see things with more cultural understanding, at the same time being more inquisitive when talking to the local people. For instance, Gloria and Ilsa asked different staff in the hostel in Phnom Penh about their views on their current government, how much they knew and felt about the Khmer Rouge while many volunteers had chats with tuktuk drivers, and then shared what they heard or saw at the debriefings.

ELIV organised a visit to the Angkor, which was framed as an outing with children from the school we volunteered in for the first two days. Each volunteer was paired up with one or two children, and the group was led by a local tour guide. The idea was that although it is free for local residents to visit the site, not many of the children in the village have got the chance to go due to the distance and lack of transportation or accompany from their family. Therefore, this outing with the volunteers gave them the opportunity to appreciate the heritage through observing and sketching of the statues in the temples as well as understanding the history and culture of their own country from a guided tour. The tour guide could speak both Khmer and Mandarin, basically both the children and volunteers were given the tour. Unavoidably, the volunteers were

taking pictures along the way, of the spots, of themselves, of the children, and with the children. Structured as an outing with the children, the volunteers did not see it as a typical sightseeing. Like Gwendolyn said, her experience with her companion kid was more prominent than that of seeing the Angkor. She said,

*I may not specifically remember the Angkor, I would remember the Angkor only because of the time I spent with the kid there and how the interaction was like, instead of telling you about specific attractions or photos I took. (Interview, 3/3/2017)*

Instead of capturing the landscapes, they rather captured the communicative moments, the moments of seeing things with and through the children. What made it unique from the traditional visit to the Angkor was accompanying the village kids during which the volunteers had direct contact with the children. Especially because she is a SEN teacher, the contact with children made her think about what she had been doing for her students with different issues of accessibility and what she could do more for them. This issue of education became one of the main topics of dialogues with other volunteers and the project team. It undeniably stimulated some discussions and reflections; it, however, may seem to rationalise the purpose of the outing, and taking photos of the children and using them to tell the story.

Visiting to the Pub Street in Siem Reap city centre, the most crowded and touristic place of the city, was another scheduled activity in the evening by ELIV. It was not the usual free-time activity after dinner; rather, it was a task of observing different groups of people in the street, including policemen in different uniforms, street kids, and victims of landmine explosion. Before the observation task, we were given a tour by the local Project Manager starting from the 'Made In Cambodia' Charity Market to several shops around the Pub Street area associated with a NGO selling handcrafts made in Cambodia. When the volunteers started the observation, although they were immersed into the streets full of tourists, they were confined with a mission and thus distanced from what other tourists normally did in that place. During the briefing for this task, the Project Director told the volunteers that he had seen several times children carrying their younger siblings asking for money from foreign tourists in the street. He further explained the context that those street kids were under the control by organised gang using drugs so that the kids had to go back with money in exchange for injection. A few volunteers were then looking forward to seeing the same scene. To their disappointment, they did not see any. This anticipation made me wonder: whether it was the expectation to see and encounter with street kids begging for money experienced by other foreign tourists in such so-called less developed countries, or it was the hope to reflect on the issue through in-depth discussion and possibly plan for further action. Although they did not see any street kids, all volunteers managed to see the victims of landmine explosion performing in the Pub Street and talk to policemen. The observation did not end in the city centre. After returning to the hotel, the Project Director held the debriefing on the visit to charity market and street observations. This



debriefing helped to further unpack some of the issues with the support of the Project Director's experiences in Cambodia for 10 years. Taking place in the middle of the trip, this debriefing also served as a critical reflection on the roles and responsibilities of volunteers on such issues. From the pre-trip briefing to sharing sessions during the trip, the team leaders or local Project Manager circulated the message that these volunteering projects should be perceived as sharing of resources. During the interviews, many volunteers also reported this attitude towards volunteer tourism or the locals. For instance, Xena said,

*it's not me of the superiority and others of the inferiority, it's an equal relationship... I rather prefer Gordon's idea of sharing. When I decided to join, I thought I had this ability so I wanted to help, I did have this thought of providing help, but I did not think I am from a higher ground or more superior. Until Gordon mentioned 'sharing' did I think it's more appropriate to frame voluntary service. I think 'help' is not inappropriate, but it may lead us to think about the status of the volunteer and the volunteered. 'Sharing' is more accurate in defining voluntary service. (Interview, 21/2/2017)*

They believed that their relationship with local people involved an exchange, exchange of resources, cultures, and knowledge or skills. The debriefing and reflection sessions helped to re-orientate the volunteers to think beyond the issues laid in front of them as problems for them to resolve. Rather, they were guided to think critically what they were doing and what they could do in their life, and whom they wanted to become. For example, Helen said,

*it does help develop myself, developing myself through different challenges or shocks, culturally or of values, when your values are challenged, then you will think which one is right or wrong, good or bad, through the process of thinking, then you may have a new perspective. Let say volunteering, after it I have started to think which way is a better way to help others, an equilibrium status, gradually, I may have an answer, while values and perspectives are being shaped. (Interview, 24/1/2017)*

'Free time' was also ambiguous on ELIV's itinerary. 'Free time' on the schedule was more like leisurely themed activity while activity with a theme was indeed just a free time. For example, "visit to designers' street" in the last morning was indeed a free time for wandering around a street with a few local designers' boutiques. As it was a themed time, volunteers were conditioned to do the window shopping, and some of us eventually went to stay and relax in a coffee shop after having been to every shop that was open that day. On the other hand, the 'free time' on the itinerary was scheduled for an optional charity circus show by Phare, a local NGO which supports young Cambodian people in developing skills. Before the trip, the team leaders recommended this circus show in the Facebook group and reminded those signed up for it to bring enough cash (US\$18). The whole group went. After the circus, they arranged tuk-tuks to bring us either to the Pub Street or back to the hotel, and only four of us (including myself) decided to return to hotel. This structured 'free time' by scheduling a charity-related event before the real free time in the city centre had successfully

added some values to the experience of the service trip and something to be discussed at the debriefing. Because of this kind of constructed imagination and anticipation of a service trip, inexperienced participants like Camellia were not prepared for such itinerary. She said,

*when we were freed to walk around the night market, I was like, omg, what am I going to do?  
Because before the trip, I was not expecting free time in night market like being a tourist,  
that's why I did not bring a lot of cash, so I could not spend money other than the circus.  
(Interview, 25/2/2017)*

Without enough cash to go for massage with other volunteers at the last night, she and Hestia decided to go to the Charity Market again. While she did not get prepared to become a tourist there, she went to that charity market because she was introduced to that place the other day and thought that was a good and 'safe' place to go. Although service trip was regarded as a form of travelling by many informants, it did not occur to her mind that she would have time for shopping or other leisure activities. This was probably orientated by the team leaders before the trip with the ethical framing of a service trip, forging the experiences in the way that volunteers should be seen as, or they believed they were, travellers acting more responsibly than mass tourists.

When the volunteers decided to join the trip, they wanted to take it as a form of travelling on top of volunteering. Therefore, they had certain expectations of some kinds of experiences through their higher contact level with the local people. Meanwhile, their anticipations and actual experiences were disoriented and re-oriented by the sending organisations. The sending organisations tried to distance the volunteers from the touristic spots and veil their experience as a tourist through including discussion of issues from their assigned tasks and various intensity of interactions with local people as a volunteer. This, to a certain extent, helped to ease some of the guilt and anxiety of being seen as ordinary tourists, when they were in a touristy site or popular sightseeing destinations. Nevertheless, when they were asked about the impacts on the local people or local community, most of them were not hugely confident on the scale of positive impacts on community development which was ironically the main focus of both organisations. Most of the time they think the 'something' was trivial, or on themselves rather than on the local people. This again brings up the debate on the dichotomy of 'doing something good' and 'having something good done', or the kind of 'dilemma of being volunteers locally and overseas and the need to have international volunteers, which I am still thinking about it' (Helen, Interview, 24/1/2017) which some of the volunteers have had. Easing the sense of guilt may pose the danger of impeding the transformation process. The sending organisations' efforts in enforcing the moral identity may disguise the social inequality, which echoes what has been argued by Simpson (2004). However, what was not fully discussed in her study but raised in more recent ones (e.g. Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Hammersley, 2014; Henry, 2019; Knollenberg et al., 2014) and explored in this

thesis is how the volunteers are engaged with issues of social injustice throughout the volunteering programme especially in pre-trip and post-trip activities. As we can see, the volunteers and the sending organisations were trying to maintain the identity as a volunteer, the anticipated and constructed moral self, as such identity indeed has got the potential in facilitating transformation through self-reflection during and after the trip, especially enforced by the sending organisations to be a conscious tourist. When they found how little they could do to 'put something back', the ideologies of doing good was negotiated and ameliorated by being guided to think from sending help to sharing resources and later to plan a course of actions. It is important to see how the representation and reinforcement of this identity embodied from being part of the various moral communities is translated into additional qualities of the bodies, or *suzhi* of volunteers despite their socio-cultural differences. In other words, it is vital to see how the volunteers are becoming or have become the kind of individuals who are more ethically conscious of their everyday practices beyond the timescales of the service trip.

## 6.4 Transformation on the move

*From my experiences, the change was happening during the trip, but it extends beyond the trip. I think the change is not like a straight line, it is rather fluctuating, it's shock from time to time. (Dawn, Interview, 26/2/2017)*

Following Mezirow's 10-phase of transformative learning, it comes to devising plans of action and trying new roles so as to reintegrate into "one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective". Nevertheless, Coghlan and Gooch (2011) found an insufficiency of existing volunteer tourism programmes in incorporating the two steps – 'developing a plan of action' and 'provisional efforts to try out new roles and gain feedback'. Given the length of many of the service trips, I propose that phases 5-10 could be reshuffled in the sense that the moral fulfilment from the belonging to other moral worlds (moral communities) enables the volunteers to reintegrate into their ordinary life with new perspectives or disrupted frames of reference and then further explore and plan for actions.

Volunteer tourism has been criticised for having insignificant impacts due to its short-term, one-off nature. However, the impacts on the volunteers did not seem unsustainable, especially when the sending organisations introduced different tools in facilitating the process of transformation. The volunteering space serves as a space for critical self-reflection, either because the volunteers were distanced from their everyday life or they were exposed to shock, or both. During the trip, different activities acted as platforms for searching the possibilities and the experience from different encounters was intense. Meanwhile, the team leaders helped to elicit reflection and responses to others' sharing, which stimulated the volunteers to engage in self-

examination and discussions about wider issues. However, although these feelings may come at different points of time or different intensity, the volunteers believed that the feelings or emotions from the experience would not fade away upon the completion of the projects. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the moral codes and everyday practices were suspended in the liminal space. This also eased and encouraged the opening up of the self and thus possibilities or perspectives. Here, volunteer tourism is not just about physically being there with the intention of acting morally but the intensive immersion into a new frame of references in the liminal space, and the experience is a catalyst for transformation. The process may involve a prolonged period of confusion and muddling, but the activities during the trip may trigger a breakthrough or a sense of enlightenment (Cranton, 1994), during or after the trip. For example, Dawn explained,

*it's shock from time to time, the shock at the moment of happening should be the greatest, and its intensity would be lower after returning home, maybe because of our ordinary life, but it won't fade away... I can remember those feelings, they won't make me feel that I need to do something immediately. I am still thinking what I can do, in what forms of participation, but they won't be forgotten as I have written it down, also the feelings are so profound that they can hardly be forgotten. I have got many inspirations for my life direction and goals, but it's not immediate, it may be immediate for some people like [those who founded] Light Love that they have done something from the inspirations, but it's not for many others, it may not be the immediate outcome of the influence or inspirations. It is a catalyst in our daily life, you can have different perspectives when seeing the same thing, may start thinking of other things. (Interview, 26/2/2017)*

In a conceptual framework proposed by Callanan and Thomas (2005), these trips lasting for less than four weeks would be categorised as 'shallow'. However, I argue that this would be too generalised or simplified. We should look at the temporality of the shock from encounters. If intensity of the encounters was high enough, the experience could be lasting as a reminder, as the sense of being in their daily life. This reminder was somehow sustained by the feeling of *communitas* which did not fade away after the trip but was lingering in its own way over time. Travelling from the familiar everyday to a new environment, the observations and contact with local people could lead volunteers for introspection, while NGO visits such as charity restaurants and Kamonohashi Project allowed volunteers to explore what others have been doing in their process of searching for new roles and actions and possibly gave them some inspirations. As experienced or heard from the informants, most of the changes took place after the trip, particularly behavioural manifestations. Their actions and new roles range from continued doing good for the locals and bridging ethical practices back home, to changes in practices by reflecting on wider issues and in life directions. For example, during the ELIV project trip, we attended a sharing given by the three founders of Light Love which is a project initiated after they joined one of ELIV's Project Cambodia trips. They noticed a need for lighting at night especially for going out to use the 'natural toilet' during their trip in 2015, therefore they gathered to think about what

they could do, from which then they came up with the plan of sending solar powered torches to rural families in Cambodia and have made several trips and sent torches to thousands of families since 2016.

From our trip, Camellia was struck by the story of the village and the palm sugar and thus she was finding ways to create a sale platform for it. At the end of a reflection session, the local Project Manager came to share a story about how she discovered the village and the meaning of palm trees and palm sugar to the people there. Following that she passed around some palm sugar in cubes wrapped in palm leaves, the traditional way of packaging palm sugar for sale, as well as some dried fruits and crisps. As she was telling the story, the volunteers were developing association with the village and villagers because the volunteers were concerned about humanity, livelihoods, history, heritage and relations with others. After the session, several volunteers asked the team leaders further about issues such as how the villagers produced and sold the palm sugar. Without established and stable chains of supply and sales like those sold in supermarket, they relied on the local Project Manager to share the story and collect orders from the volunteers of ELIV every month, and word-of-mouth by team leaders back in Taiwan. The story told by a local not only added a value to the palm sugar, making it unique and more authentic than those sold in supermarket or souvenir shops, it also helped the making of the experience and identity from consuming it more ethically as a volunteer. The experience and feelings were so intense for a few volunteers that they decided to do something. For example, Gwendolyn wrote the story on a card attached to the palm sugar when giving out as souvenir, Amelie also posted the story on social media hoping to draw more attention. In particular, Camellia was mulling over the idea of setting up a sale platform for that village's palm sugar and other products. She shared the changes of her attitude and plan of putting her thoughts into action,

*... I have been looking for what I can do, what I am able to do. Palm sugar...I saw palm sugar in supermarket when we went and thought it's quite special, but I didn't have the desire to buy because I didn't know much about it. Later, I heard the story from Bun Chou and realised the story behind palm sugar... I came back with this particular issue, thinking about how I can help them...In the past, I would have just given up as it involved laws and regulations, but now I checked the relevant pieces of law and regulations. That's the change I didn't expect on myself. I want to try, to see how far my ability can help. I am still at the stage of gathering information as I'm working during daytime. How far it will go is not a matter currently, see how much I can do...Even my boyfriend asked if I have become another person after coming back...My enthusiasm usually did not last long, but this time I have a sort of connection with Cambodia, so I want to give return to them as they have given me a lot. (Interview, 25/2/2017)*

Actualising this plan takes time in acquiring knowledge, thinking about different sales and marketing models, writing proposals, and reaching a consensus with the villagers. The process of making this plan happen shows some effects on her in the way that she saw another dimension of herself and changed attitudes towards accomplishing a task, and she took the actions in achieving it, echoing the three dimensions of changes

(psychological, convictional and behavioural) as well as Steps 5-7 in Mezirow's transformative learning theory. Camellia's changes or plans of doing something more shows that the transformation was being carried on after the trip, however, the question remained here is how long these psychological, convictional and behavioural changes would last and how far the transformation could move beyond.

When the volunteers picked up issues from formal and informal discussions as well as observations, they have showed attempts to bridge them back to their everyday life and adopt changes. This may take place at the time returning home, and it may either be the same practices aggregated back from the liminal space, or behavioural changes at the stage of aggregation that different ways of living have been informed. During the trip, different activities would help volunteers to devise plan of action and extend the practices that they learnt on the trip and believed worthwhile adopting into part of their lifestyle. In the last reflection session, each of us were asked to write a letter 'I Promise I Will' to ourselves and ELIV would post to us three months after the trip. As what the team leaders believed, it did not matter if the change or plan of change was significant or trivial, what mattered was the act of making a resolution and taking action. For example, Amelie made a promise on the letter that she had to use reusable cutlery as much as she could in her daily life. During the trip, ELIV required volunteers to bring our own bowl and cutlery for having lunch in the village to reduce the use of plastic and polystyrene boxes. Amelie had been bringing reusable cutlery when eating out even before this service trip, but only on and off. After this trip, she has been exploring different reusable substitutes and putting them into practice for her promised change in her everyday life. The letter she received three months after the trip also served as reminder of her planned action. She has also posted online regularly to share what substitutes she has found and swapped to.

In addition to bridging practices from the trip to everyday life, evidence has also shown from volunteers adopting new ways of living due to their changed perspectives. For instance, after discussing issues faced by the community such as loss of fishery due to clearance of mangrove forests for development, global circulation of wastes and environmental degradation altogether as a vicious cycle, Kathleen had higher awareness and started to relate issues from her home country to the global scale and herself in relation to people living in another place, thus making some changes in her daily life hoping to influence people surrounding her as well. She shared,

*those issues are actually related to us. The first thing I can think of is that many big corporations always set up factories in those countries like Cambodia and Vietnam because they have fewer regulations. Why don't they set up in home country? Because of NIMBY (not in my backyard), people of their home country don't like. Then why you can put something you don't want in other's home? During the time in Cambodia, I had very profound feeling, when I saw many shells attached to mangroves, I felt very upset, and a scene in my mind that*

*when I bought a t-shirt from H&M, that's produced in a factory set up in Cambodia and sewage discharged to the sea, and soon the polluted water was coming to our sea... Why you have sufficient supply of water, because you use their water. Why I feel happy or things are normal because my waste is disposed to others' place... I think, that's not okay. Sadly, many people in Hong Kong would ask 'what bothers you?'...*

*Now I am more aware, I will turn off all lights at home which on the other hand my mum usually leaves one on before leaving home, but I will switch it off... she understands that I save resources. Not just for saving money, but it's not okay if things are getting worse. I am more aware of environmental issues. (Interview, 25/1/2017)*

Again, whether she would keep doing these for one month or one year and more is still unanswered in this thesis. But what I want to emphasise here is the prolonged process of transformation beyond the service trip rather than transformation at the end of the trip as the outcome of the volunteer tourism experience.

In terms of actions, some volunteers have taken up new roles or even changes in their life directions. As Ateljevic and Tomljenovic (2016) propose, transformative or conscious travellers get their courage to make crucial life changes through travelling. As mentioned in previous chapter, a few Taiwanese volunteers (Amelie, Camellia and Hestia) have joined ELIV as team leaders, not only because they could stay in the moral community and expand the moral network, but it also symbolises their process of transformation or 'search for something' due to disrupted frames of reference. For example, Camellia and Hestia were more determined in making the crucial decision in changing their career path on top of signing up as the team leader. As both of them said they got inspiration, the trigger from this country and the people, they got the courage to face different dimensions of themselves, and they understood what they really wanted to do. Therefore, Camellia was planning to do a master's programme on social work and administration while she changed to work in a social enterprise which promotes organic farming and green living. She has been actively leading project teams to Cambodia and Thailand and also sharing in workshops, through which she believed she has been engaged in more dialogues with others with similar interests and more reflection on what she has been doing and what more she could do. Similarly, Hestia led several projects teams to Cambodia and China from which she said she had a clearer idea of what she wanted and what she could give up such as the highly-paid teaching job. She quitted her teaching position in government to teach in a private tutoring school with shorter working hours, which allowed her to fulfil her dream of running small alternative and conscious tours in the way similar to what Ateljevic and Tomljenovic (2016) have summarised, from setting up the team and a Facebook page to organising the first tour.

In contrast, Amelie believed that she is still at the stage of exploration. This is an extending process from her first trip with ELIV in 2015. She said,

*at the end of the trip, Gordon who was our team leader gave each of us a letter, in which he asked me to join Project Cambodia, and... that's quite personal, not really, but he said when he saw me, I looked like I was in search for something, so he recommended me to join the Project. He found himself in Cambodia, so he hoped that I could find what I was looking for after going there. (Interview, 22/2/2017)*

Since Amelie started doing voluntary work from university, she has had different views on volunteering from her mother. In addition, they have had opposing views on how her life should be such as study, work, and marriage. As she had already followed her mother's wish to finish a master's degree, she wanted to get some sort of freedom in leading her own life and making individual decisions. As she said, Gordon's letter gave her an additional push. Through the contact with other volunteers and local people, observation of and engaging in other forms of lifestyle and life struggles, she said she 'got inspirations from this land'. Although she has signed up as a team leader of ELIV, she joined another volunteering project to Qinghai again where she went volunteering overseas the very first time after the trip, hoping to find back the self with the initial passion. While she is trying new roles or actions, she is still on the process of searching or becoming the desired self through ongoing deeper understanding of the self. This is more apparent on returning volunteers showing some signs of transforming or becoming, but we cannot deny the same from other volunteers as they may extend the process through other similar forms of activity.

These happened at the aggregation stage in which volunteers returned with a new status or a new state of mind undergoing transformation or ready for transformation. The process of critical self-reflection may even persist longer than the trip itself, postponing the phases of planning of actions and trying new roles to the aggregation stage. This is dependent on the multiple subjectivities of the volunteers in the context of particular social group experience, relationship and life course and thus how the transition from volunteering back to everyday life takes place (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Hopkins et al., 2015). Although what volunteers would do after returning from the trip may not be directly related to the cause of the projects in which they participated such as environmental issues, education, domestic violence and so on, their enhanced awareness was embedded in their plans of taking actions or new roles, or changes in practices. Undeniably, these service trips are short-term by nature; but here we see the potential that positive impacts could be elaborated from the practices during the trip to be more sustainable or into a wider scope in post-trip everyday life. During the interviews, many informants mentioned that 'you can't pretend not knowing when you have known'. Since the volunteers were exposed to the issues in a different context or culture, various activities have helped them reflect and rethink their roles and responsibilities, their relations with others, and the nature and causes of problems as part of a community and this world, when people and things are getting more interconnected. The experience made them become more conscious and drive them to take action. Having been the moral



subjects created, they have their assumed responsibility as well as quest for recognition and moral fulfilment. Rather than only performing and acting to reinforce the moral identities, if the consciousness and catalysts to change persist, these identities can be translated into moral capital and authentic, ordinary qualities of the moral subjects over time. Once internalised through the experience of being-with, being-alongside and being-in, these moral subjects could become the individuals who are more conscious of what they are doing and what can be done in their everyday life. This is similar to the transition from volunteers to activists found by McGehee and Santos (2005) and also the challenge of re-negotiating the self on return faced by the young people in Hopkin and colleagues' study (Hopkins et al., 2015). However, this spatiotemporal dimension in transition is significant but still requires more attention in the literature.

## **6.5 Moralising differently**

By employing primarily Mezirow's (2000) 10-step transformative learning framework as well as dimensions of transformative learning proposed by O'Sullivan (2002) and Taylor (2008), this chapter has attended to examine the potentialities of volunteer tourism in changing worldview of the volunteers and the forms of transformation resulted. The key to transform our frames of reference is to become more critically reflective of our own assumptions, learning how to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings. Change is an outcome of confrontation through which we are learning to construct and appropriate new and revised interpretations of meaning of different encounters.

As I have analysed, volunteer tourism possesses the potential to provide an experience that catalyses transformation on volunteers. The volunteer tourism experience constitutes a specific space, time and audience for participants to engage in disorienting dilemma and introspection which may stimulate ideas of action plan to make the change. This form of travelling from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the hustle and bustle to the calm and simple, or from the highly socially alienated to the deeply engaged and connected has made them shocked or awakened, becoming more conscious of dimensions of their life which had long been ignored or suppressed in their daily life. These encounters brought them to have deeper understanding of the self, questioning their beliefs and ideologies, as well as reflecting on their everyday behaviours and lifestyles.

This form of temporal escape allows the volunteers to distance themselves from the realms of everyday life which they think is full of problems of humanity and to suspend moral codes and everyday practices, then work and learn together in a liminal, temporal space. During the trip, they find a different self, the lost qualities on human beings, and different ways of living and being in the world. Critical reflection is directed by the

sending organisations towards what is lacking in their daily life and volunteering provides the time and space for them to pursue them, instead of towards the poverty or inequality, the sort of geographical imaginaries constricted reinforcing the North-South divide. This thus changes the framing of volunteer tourism from sending aid to sharing and exchange, which is different from the conventional language of development used by the sending organisations in the West. This form of travelling and reflection undeniably is a spatial practice (Crossley, 2012). However, when people need to travel to so-called less developed countries where they believe people there are uncontaminated so as to seek for changes or inspirations for rethinking their own values and perspectives, it is worth asking about the problems facing in their home countries which are usually more developed countries characterised by neoliberalism, individualism or even conflicts. This may then explain why volunteer tourism has become a prevailing choice. The quest for changing ways of being in the world in turn reflects the need for a shift in human consciousness, or such shift has been taking place, as in the transmodern paradigm manifested through tourism (Ateljevic, 2009; Ghisi, 2008).

Meanwhile, activities or contexts are instrumentalised by sending organisations as tools for disorienting dilemma, introspecting, and re-orienting for changes. As shown, these tools were useful in the process of disorienting dilemma or effecting changes in the frames of reference, as proposed by Taylor (2008). These contexts are also important in strengthening volunteers' moral identity. The sending organisations tried to distance the volunteers from the touristic spots and veil their experience as a tourist through including discussion of issues from their assigned tasks and various intensity of interactions with local people as a volunteer. Injecting a theme of discussion into such as visits and eating ensured the ethical framing of a service trip. Self-examination was seen on some volunteers, exhibiting a sense of guilt. These instrumentalised activities may ease some of the guilt and anxiety of being seen as ordinary tourists, maintaining the existing ethical narratives and shaping the experiences in the way that volunteers should be seen as, or they believed they were, travellers acting more responsibly than mass tourists. There is arguably a risk that their acts of travelling ethically tend to be rationalised instead of being encountered naturally. It may also impede the transformation process. However, as analysed above, the volunteers and the sending organisations were trying to maintain the identity as a volunteer, the anticipated and constructed moral self, as such identity indeed has got the potential in facilitating transformation through self-reflection during and after the trip, especially enforced by the sending organisations to be a conscious tourist.

The moral identity and transformation should be perceived from the spatiotemporal dimension. Volunteer tourists have been criticised for not bringing positive impacts to the local communities in the current literature. However, I argue that the spatiality and temporality of the shock and transformation should not be neglected.

Here, volunteer tourism is not just about physically being there with the intention of acting morally but also the intensive immersion into a new frame of reference in the liminal space, and the experience is a catalyst for transformation. The intensity of the experience could be so great that the volunteer tourists would take actions or take up new roles in making contribution to the causes in a different manner. The experience should not be perceived as only a tool to create impacts in-situ; it should be conceived as a trigger. The experience happens at one place but does not anchor at a fixed point, place or time. It should encompass the quality and potential to be nurtured, further muddled, take shape and take place. The temporal dimension is particularly significant as the experience of *communitas* still lingers in its own way as time passes, which helps to sustain the moral identity which carries the potential in facilitating transformation to take place, while the impacts caused by the transformation could take place in different forms and localities. From the experience of the volunteers of this research, it is a process of becoming. This becoming is a transition from the moral subject being instrumentalised or told what to do and what not to do to a more ethically engaged, more conscious and reflective of what s/he is doing and thus the meaning of life. They have shown some sorts of change in terms of lifestyle and life direction instead of a continuity of the old rhythms upon return commonly found among the Western volunteers (Crossley, 2012). It moves from a correlational impact – they participate in volunteer tourism so they go to ethically-charged places and take part in ethical activities – to a causal impact – after they go on the service trip they become the kind of person who are conscious of their everyday practices back home. The change takes place in the sense that they want something for developing the better self, caring for the self, rather than simply fulfilling the service obligation. Therefore, it would be sensible to look at the possible changes and impacts beyond the timeframe and context of the trip.

Responding to the moral landscape, this is a shift from learning about global citizenship to learning for global citizenship, and further links up service obligation and transformative learning by looking at how transformation can be facilitated back in classroom for students during their muddling period. Rather than only being instrumentalised to act ethically and to reinforce the moral identities, the process of critical self-reflection and transformative learning helps the inculcation of moral capital and ordinary qualities of an individual over time.

Instead of seeing it as an epistemological process, this transformation is also an ontological process. This is different from previous studies which tend to focus on reported transformative outcomes (e.g. Lepp, 2008; Lo & Lee, 2011; Pan, 2017) without much looking into the transformational process or underpinning that contributes to the making and experience of the moral self. This chapter has attended to unpack this process which contributes to the understanding of taking part in volunteer tourism as a self-forming or re-inventing

work. It is not just about doing something good; it is also concerned with the micro-processes of self-questioning and self-seeking that contribute to the self-forming. This re-shaping of the tourists is embodied through the plans and actions they attempt after the travel experience.

On the one hand, volunteer tourism provides contexts for experiencing shock and confrontation that disrupts our meaning perspectives. On the other hand, it is the time away from everyday life as well as the leisure or idle time in which the volunteers critically reflect on their lifestyles by going through the process of negotiating their purposes, values, feelings and meanings. Rather than perceiving volunteer tourism as a form of travel with the aim of changing the so-called poor people's lives, it is possible to moralise it differently by considering the ethical, transformative and aesthetic dimensions of the tourism activity as a form to experience the self so as to trigger a change of assumptions, ideologies and everyday practices. This may then eradicate some of the cynical perception of volunteer tourism as highlighted by Ateljevic (2009), which in turn reflects the re-shaping of tourism studies under the proposed paradigm shift.

## **Chapter 7 Conclusion**

This thesis has attended to the question of why people travel as volunteers on the basis of the ‘moral turn’ in geography and later in tourism studies. This question was first approached through unpacking the complex ethical structure or framework of predispositions that frames the motivations of taking part in volunteer tourism which at the same time emerges as an appropriate and appealing choice. It was then approached through delving into the experiences and practices of the volunteer tourists to draw out the embeddedness of ethics in practices and to review and reflect on what people are searching for. This thesis has widened the discussion on volunteer tourism by inviting localised, nuanced understandings of this activity as a social trend in Chinese societies in East Asia, specifically in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In this concluding chapter, I seek to draw together the key insights from tracing why these Chinese individuals travel as volunteer tourists. I attempt to offer some thoughts in how we may re-conceptualise volunteer tourism from a broader approach before highlighting some contributions and proposing potential areas for further research.

### **7.1 Re-conceptualising volunteer tourism**

From the thesis question, I do not intend to conceive volunteer tourism simply as a form of leisure travel, an alternative to mass tourism to reduce negative impacts and outcomes caused by the latter. Moving further to consider it as a social trend, I aim to unpack what this social trend tells us. In order to achieve this, I am re-conceptualising volunteer tourism based on the two main components of tourism – motivation and outcome.

As a choice of travelling, taking part in volunteer tourism should be perceived not just as a discrete choice of a single volunteer tourist. It is a prevailing choice from the overarching, complex ethical terrain in which an individual chooses to do things from a particular instilled position. Unravelling the multiple layers of framing that aggregate into volunteer tourism being an appropriate choice, it has revealed that the ethical framework in the Chinese societies serve as dispositions that guide an individual to take action. Neoliberal constructions and responsabilisation through institutionalising service obligation in schools help to mobilise young people to take up more responsibility and encourage students to extend care to distant others. The culturally rooted ethical dispositions also inform developing oneself by taking up more responsibilities, although these may come into conflicts in terms of the ways of doing it.

This choice embodies how structures of the social world are incorporated in the body of an individual in certain ways that structure how the individual acts. Service has been made mandatory as a graduation requirement, together with the promotion of the concept of global citizenship, strategies are in place actively responsabilising young people to extend their care and bear responsibility for distant others. Through these strategies, they have been instrumentalised to think about what kind of person they want to become and what they should do to acquire and accumulate the consonant personal qualities. This is somehow supported by the traditional values in cultivating *ren* in order to become a good person. However, there is a generational difference in the way of cultivating *ren* and defining a good person. This generational difference rests on the clashes between family duty and ethical imperatives to help others, and thus differing perceptions towards helping others locally and globally, based on the traditional particularistic care ethics and changing material conditions. The encounter between dispositions inculcated from school and family adds another layer of dispositions to the habitus to form a new pattern of thought. However, the sense of new ethics seems to be stronger possibly due to more active and explicit dissemination of message and instrumentalising strategies. These multiplicities of rationalising travelling as a volunteer have brought the conceptualisation of volunteer tourism beyond an absolute dichotomy between altruism and self-interest which varies from one tourist to another, to the discussion around way of being and becoming a moral self.

This social trend also manifests a quest for belonging and rebuilding social ties that can be actualised through being part of moral communities emerged from this travelling activity. ‘Community’ touches very deep human aspirations to experience a sense of belonging (Mulligan et al., 2016). Many informants raised negativities about the individualistic culture arising from neoliberal responsabilisation in Hong Kong and Taiwan, resulting in lost social cohesion and social crisis. Their desire for community implies such loss in their everyday life in the perceived fragmented society. This then leads to a quest for a temporal escape to distance themselves from the realms of everyday life which they thought is full of problems of humanity. The volunteer tourism space offers a liminal space in which moral codes are suspended and ordinary rhythms are interrupted, allowing the volunteers to experience different facets of the self and find a new self through re-evaluating their own values and perspectives. This search for new ways of being in the world reflects the problems facing volunteers’ home countries which are usually characterised by neoliberalism, individualism or even conflicts. Volunteer tourism as a prevailing choice mirrors the need for a shift in human consciousness, or a shift-in-progress, towards a proposed transmodern paradigm (Ateljevic, 2009; Ghisi, 2008; Magda, 2008).

Re-conceptualising volunteer tourism, I propose not focusing on the tangible forms of impacts and outcomes such as what has been changed in/for the local community. Rather, we should look at the *qualities of outcomes*

of volunteer tourism – social relationships, change in consciousness, and forming/becoming of the moral self. As of the desire for community, social relationships are the outcomes of growing mangrove seedlings, building the house, and revealing the inner self in a collective manner. This kind of I-Thou dialogical relationship found in this space reconnects alienated people, rebuilding the lost moral fabrics. This is actualised through three forms of moral communities that I have identified – moral community among volunteer tourists, moral community with the locals and moral community of like-minded people. A moral community among volunteers was constructed by sending organisations, to which then volunteers maintained their belonging by following the norms of the community. Between volunteers and locals, they actively constructed a community and sought recognition from each other. Social relations in these two communities were developed through engaging in group endeavour, producing the state of being-alongside; they were then strengthened through liberating the authentic self and collective joy, heightening their experience in the state of being-with. A moral community with like-minded people was consciously created by the volunteers as an expression of inclusion and exclusion. On the one hand, the volunteers built up and expanded the web of relationships by acknowledging membership of other like-minded people, people with shared interests in the wider community. On the other hand, they differentiated themselves from people with opposing values or indifferent attitude as the volunteers did not receive the recognition as desired.

While the volunteers engaged the locals, the ‘others’, in their moral community to gain a sense of recognition, the locals also developed trust to admit the volunteers to be part of them or bring both into a social relationship. As Bellah et al., (1998) suggest, a ‘good community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community is not about silent consensus, but where the consensus can be challenged and changed – often gradually, sometimes radically – over time’ (as cited in Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p.192). These moral communities were constructed to which volunteer participants feel belonged and make themselves accepted, being-in, so as for moral fulfilment. They have actualised this quality of a good community by creating a space in which differences and contradictions are simultaneously enacted, challenged, negotiated and remained. Nevertheless, my informants’ experiences have reflected that these moral communities are still ‘minorities’ in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Recognition still takes time; maybe re-conceptualising volunteer tourism to regard social relationship as a significant outcome and re-shaping both the tourists and field would be productive for this process.

A shift in consciousness may denote the re-shaping, which is manifested by this social trend. As the analysis has shown, volunteer tourism brought the participants into contexts that confront with their meaning

perspectives, in which they had deeper understanding of the self, questioning their beliefs and ideologies as well as becoming more conscious of dimensions of their life which had long been ignored or suppressed in their daily life. This helps re-conceptualise volunteer tourism as an ontological process of transformation by looking into the transformational process or underpinning that contributes to the making and experience of the moral self.

Rather than celebrating the positive impact of accumulating personal qualities through taking part in volunteer tourism programmes as some previous studies did in the literature, this study is to highlight that developing a good self is the choice; it is also an outcome. This form of travelling is not just about doing something good; it is also concerned with micro-processes of self-fulfilment, self-seeking and self-questioning during which self-forming is facilitated. During and across these micro-processes, what kind of person is a volunteer tourist? Under the active dissemination of discourses of responsibility and instrumentalisation of compulsory volunteering, an individual is crafted into a global citizen, a class of moral agents. This moral subject in this class is not a simply responsible, rational, autonomous neoliberal subject with choices; the moral subject aims to become a good person, a better self, thus taking part in volunteer tourism becomes an appropriate choice when the rhetoric of marketing materials appeals to this quality. As a volunteer tourist, the active doing of belonging engages the moral subject in social relations which enable and benefit moral selving through taking up moral responsibility, social interaction and reciprocity. Moral selving does not necessarily emphasise the self; the process here speaks about how the development of the self reconnects the lost moral fabric in our fragmented society. Through interactions, rather than being lost in the collective of the moral community, the volunteers are able to seek self-identity, to care and to be cared. The process of engaging in group endeavour and in doing good and further being in moral communities produces a moral identity which may otherwise be claimed by seeking recognition. At the stage of aggregation, the volunteers return to the everyday life with a new status acquired from the cultivation of the self and engaging in social relations with others. The new experience of the self may induce alternative ways of living in different patterns and forms of care, responsibility and obligation as a result of moral fulfilment. This moral identity somehow is also useful to stimulate changes especially when the status of a moral subject is reiterated and reinforced by sending organisations. As this study has shown that volunteer tourism has the potential to cause a shift in consciousness, identity of the moral subject can then be re-invented from an instrumentalised moral agent to a moral self who is conscious of her/his everyday practices back home. Thus, the changing instilled positions of volunteer tourists, together with developing social relationship and shifting consciousness as the outcomes, provides a new lens of conceptualising volunteer tourism.



The spatiotemporal dimension of the outcomes also provides a significant and useful lens in re-conceptualising volunteer tourism. In the current literature, volunteer tourists have been criticised for not bringing positive or sustainable impacts to the local communities due to their short stay and lack of skills. Re-evaluating *spatiality and temporality of outcomes* allows us to move our situated understanding of volunteer tourism to a broader framework. The volunteering space and time are appropriate as well as important for producing meaningful relationships and intense experience from group endeavour and interactions. The material outcomes in the place embody volunteers' intangible emotional attachment to the land. The travelling experience also provides the right rhythms which positively interrupt the ordinary ones so that critical self-reflection and searching for meanings are enabled in contexts of shock. However, muddling period could be prolonged at the aggregation stage so that changes may take place in different localities and forms in a different segment of time. Although direct and significant changes happen mostly to the volunteers, we acknowledge the geographies of changes, which is manifested in, for example, changing everyday practices exhibited by the informants, that contribute to a different cause in the wider, global system.

One may raise the question of morality of using the Global South space as a trigger for change or to disorientate dilemma. However, we may want to acknowledge that this form of travel provides a context for articulating the messy ways of defining, being, expressing and transforming the moral self. My argument for this attempt of re-conceptualisation is that the enactment of ethics of care, responsibility and obligation should not be premised on the narrative that the volunteered are those inferior, without agency while the volunteers are travelling to send aid to change those people's lives. Rather, we should focus on developing a moral self through interaction with the place and people encountered with reference to broader global issues instead of being held solely responsible for issues in another locality. We may even go further to conceptualise the relationship as partnership, as a space for personal learning emerged in which new kinds of alliance and relationships can be forged (Schech et al., 2015). By re-orientating sending aids to partnership or sharing, volunteers' subjectivities may be disorientated given that the experience is so intense. Meanwhile, we should note that this requires negotiating effectively through the programme design of sending organisations and appropriate language so as to avoid reifying or reinforcing the geographical imaginaries.

## **7.2 Contributions and implications**

By posing the question of why people travel as a volunteer, this thesis contributes to the broader understanding of volunteer tourism in twofold – theoretical and practical. This study moves beyond a normative framework which would otherwise result in ourselves being overwhelmed by a long list of motivations for taking part in volunteer tourism or an absolute dichotomy between altruism and self-interest. As Sin et al. (2015) posit, the

current work on volunteer tourism have placed too much emphasis on the empirical aspects of this tourism activity, which requires efforts to ‘unpack how volunteer tourism as a social trend is part and parcel of, and contributes to our understanding of, broader social theories’ (p. 121). Adopting a ‘post normative’ analytical framework suggested by Sin et al. (2015), this research has asked more fundamental questions to conceptualise, understand and evaluate the intersections of issues and debates on such as ethics, responsibility, tourism, neoliberalism and individualism. Through the lens of volunteer tourism, this study has linked up the personal and the social in the sense that the ways of being and the search for new ways of being of an individual have reflected what is happening in the prevailing times.

By conceiving volunteer tourism as a social trend, this study has offered an analytical framework to understand how a good self is cultivated, experienced and re-invented through volunteer tourism. It draws together the concepts to examine the active and conscious technologies of the self, unconscious dispositions and the notion of quality which play out for the development of the self towards an ethical subject. It also links up the concepts of community, liminality and geographies of care to investigate the meaning and formation of the moral self in a collective setting. This responds to the call for additional theoretical exploration by posing broader theoretical questions and drawing from different disciplines (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). This study has opened up the discussion with the aim of offering some insights for reconceptualising volunteer tourism. As presented in the previous section, the proposed re-conceptualisation may lead us to re-visit the very definition of volunteer tourism offered by Wearing (2001). The definition – ‘tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment’ (Wearing, 2001, p. 1) – has skewed the volunteer landscape to the aims of alleviating poverty and conserving the environment. It overlooks the broader meanings of motivations as well as spatiality and temporality of outcomes and impacts, as I highlighted above. It should also acknowledge the ethical, transformative and aesthetic dimensions of the experience so to avoid over-moralising volunteer tourism to which criticism and cynicism towards volunteer tourism is partly attributed. Thus, re-conceptualising volunteer tourism through wider theoretical questions and analytical approach contributes to developing a more holistic theoretical framework for volunteer tourism.

This study further contributes to this theoretical framework by widening the discussion to a non-Western context. As Sin et al. (2015) have stressed, volunteer tourism should be approached spatially as the contingencies and contexts of locality significantly matter. Meanwhile, the existing academic literature on volunteer tourism has been extensively premised on Western participants, weighted with western assumptions

and ethical models, which calls for more exploration of the non-Western volunteer tourists (Lo & Lee, 2011; Pan, 2017). This suggests that we should be aware of the cultural specificity of the existing literature, at the same time acknowledging the thickness of the field and the phenomenon because geography does matter (Chang, 2015). The linguistics of the data of this research has precisely revealed the intricacies of another ethical model and value system apart from the long-standing western traditions in the literature. By looking at the complex ethical terrain in which individuals from Hong Kong and Taiwan choose to take part in volunteer tourism, this thesis has brought out what has been neglected in this line of debates and discussions in the past two decades. In this thesis, we have found that the form of responsabilisation through instrumentalisation and institutionalisation of service obligation in Hong Kong and Taiwan is different from that in the Western literature. In the West, governmental rationalities do not determine forms of subjectivities; they ‘elicit, promote, facilitate, foster, and attribute various capacities, qualities and statues to particular agents’ (Dean, 1999, p. 32; as cited in Barnett et al., 2010b, p. 44). These neoliberal practices of government ‘offer’ the individuals the new opportunities to actively participate in actions to ‘resolve the kind of issues hitherto held to be the responsibility of authorized governmental agencies’ (Burchell, 1993, p. 276). Thus, the neoliberal agents still make individual ethical choices for self-governing tasks. The finding of this research shows that in Chinese societies in East Asia, developing a good self is the choice as well as the outcome, which is slightly different from the Western responsabilisation. This study contributes to the current responsabilisation as well as alternative tourism or ethical tourism literature by looking at the complex ethical terrain in which individuals choose to do things from particular dispositions rather than positing individuals to make discrete choices.

Moreover, many informants emphasised that international volunteering is a form of sharing instead of sending help while they received more help or care than the local people did. This was partly influenced by the traditional values that remind them not to feel entitled or show off doing something good. This conception of volunteer tourism by Asian volunteers would imply a different geography of care leading us to challenge conventional North-South relationships of the carer and the cared-for. Asia has been classified as an important emerging region in world tourism (Cohen & Cohen, 2015). As mentioned in Chapter 1, volunteer tourism is not an emerging but re-emerging form of activity; but what is indeed emerging is Asia as the region of study. Nonetheless, little has changed in responding to this emergence in the mainstream volunteer tourism literature. Meanwhile, Porananond and King (2014) have argued for the need of ‘Asianising the field’ through more research of the emerging phenomenon of Asian tourists/tourism within Asia. In doing so, what is important is sensitive scholarship that acknowledges the contextual uniqueness of the phenomenon (Chang, 2015). This study is believed to be one of the attempts that contribute to this urge for ‘Asianising the field’. Asianing the

field is one of the approaches to move us away from the narrowly framed body of literature on volunteer tourism; we should acknowledge the many other traditions and sets of ethics from which growing number of participants from Asia-Pacific region and Latin America have been influenced. This thesis has stepped up the discussions from here to look at how people from non-western origins take part in this form of activity such that a more just and productive discussion can be stimulated from which more differences and similarities could be pulled out.

This research also offers some practical implications given the criticism on volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism as a form of alternative tourism has received much critical or sometimes even cynical debates largely because it brings more positive impacts to the tourists than the local community and the geographical imaginaries of poverty. By applying transformative learning theory, we may be able to develop another conception of volunteer tourism and inform more sustainable ways of implementing it. Guttentag (2009) has suggested that by orientating the purpose of the volunteer tourism projects to educating and enlightening the volunteers, the negative impacts on rationalising poverty and constructing images of the 'others' can be reduced. While acknowledging the potential positive impacts on both the tourists and the local community or even the wider society, the question lies in how this can be done and managed in a better and more sustainable way by recognising the limitations of short-term nature of the trips while highlighting their transformative dimensions. It should be planned very carefully in the way that avoids placing the local people or local community as a product to be consumed for the change on the volunteers. It should be conceptualised and promoted that it is not about changing the so-called poor people's lives. Sending organisations also bear the responsibility of not reifying geographical imaginaries especially when they instrumentalise contexts with the purpose of facilitating critical self-reflection.

Especially for participation due to service obligation, strategies should be implemented to facilitate the extended reflection during the aggregation stage of muddling or bridging practices back to everyday life in the classroom setting. This means that a step is needed to help the translation from learning about global citizenship to learning for global citizenship as this concept has been widely promoted in schools particularly in Hong Kong. In addition, volunteers could be engaged in research work for the existing projects of NGOs which are clearer about what should be done on the ground. For example, volunteers of TBW conducted a community mapping of the village as CYA intended to build a more systematic database of information regarding their project sites. Volunteers were also asked to conduct home visits to collect stories for an NGO which wanted to publish a book for children in Cambodia when I volunteered through TBW in 2015. These are examples of projects which may help to minimise disturbance at the same time volunteers would

experience the disorientation of dilemma. This also re-emphasises the connections among tourism, fun and learning (Falk et al., 2012) which tend to be ignored in the volunteer tourism literature but important as volunteer tourists are not always assumed to be compassionate and intelligent (Sin et al., 2015). Highlighting it as a form of conscious travel or cultivating consciousness through this travelling activity might eradicate some of the cynical perceptions of volunteer tourism if reconceptualised as transformative tourism.

Some of the traditional values should be acknowledged and appreciated when designing similar programmes. The findings have revealed that traditional values in the Chinese societies are still in place providing implications for practices. For example, generational difference in caring, family duty, gesture of virtue signalling and sense of community and collectivity are important everyday ethics framing participation and practices. If sending organisations can take these into account, it may attend to some of the conflicted conception of taking part in volunteer tourism and possibly reduce the extent of cynicism, at the same time enhancing awareness and consciousness of volunteer tourists.

### **7.3 Navigating further**

This thesis attends to the rationalities and practices of the non-Western volunteers in order to respond to the call for more exploration beyond the Western assumptions and ethical models. From participating in the project organised by TBW, we have seen the establishment of NGOs encouraging volunteering in Cambodia in recent years and growth of participation of young people from the so-called Global South in both domestic and international voluntary work. For example, CYA, which aims to promote non-formal youth education, environmental protection and rural community development through voluntary service, has recruited Cambodian volunteers for local and international projects through cooperation with international organisations such as the International Voluntary Service and Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Centre. When I was talking to two local volunteers, they said they took part in the volunteering project because they found it a good opportunity for cultural exchange with international volunteers and a meaningful thing to do when CYA gave a talk in their university. As we have discussed the weaving of unconscious dispositions and conscious deliberations in forming the rationalities of participation in volunteer tourism, we understand why discourses used by the sending organisations are so appealing to people that participating in volunteer tourism becomes an appropriate choice. This can then be extended to look at the prompts used by sending organisations in countries used to be volunteered, and what such rhetoric speaks to their embedded framework of predispositions. This allows us to widen the research by exploring the moral landscapes in societies of both international and local volunteer tourists, which then can be brought further to unpack the complexities of interactions and practices in the ways and kinds of moral community being constructed and evolved, as well

as reconfiguring the definition of volunteer tourism from experiences of participants from different cultural backgrounds. This may also possibly fill another gap that previous studies tend to focus on the host community without specifically addressing the voices of local volunteers in the process of knowledge production.

This study has argued that we should consider the temporality of shock and changes from the experience of volunteer tourism by conceiving it as a trigger for deeper, more long-term impacts both on the volunteers and the volunteers rather than as a tool for immediate changes in-situ. While we cannot assume that ethical intention will necessarily and directly lead to ethical actions (Deng, 2015), we also cannot assume that increased awareness and consciousness or even changes will result in lasting beliefs and practices even though we have shown the potential that positive impacts could be elaborated from the practices during the trip to be more sustainable or into a wider scope in post-trip everyday life. This research could go further as a longitudinal study to look at the lengthened temporality of shock by examining whether and how new ways of being and living have been internalised as dispositions, become ordinary and informed other ethical actions and practices. This can also be extended to explore the trend of slow tourism as a form of conscious tourism and slow-living emerging from the discussion on searching for meanings of life in Chapter 6, which are possibly the changes that take place at the aggregation stage. This then enables us to widen the lens by seeing how people find the means to change one's life(style) from travelling or even have found travelling as the new way of living. This drives us to discuss the temporality and everydayness of various forms of conscious and transformative tourism given the decreasing distinctiveness between tourism and everyday life.

Based on the research objectives of conceptualising volunteer tourism through approaching it as a social trend and the ways of being, it is worthwhile to look at the whole Greater China Region to explore the nuances of different forms of responsabilisation within the Region. This research was delimited to international volunteering and thus focused on volunteers from Hong Kong and Taiwan. As mentioned in Chapter 3, due to the nationalised agenda and geopolitics that may restrict mobility of Chinese volunteers, mainland Chinese mainly take part in domestic volunteering especially post-disaster restoration (Ong et al., 2014). As China is evolving from a developing country to global power, it is important to discuss the forms of volunteer tourism or voluntary work being promoted and the ways of promoting it. While enhancing *suzhi* has been acknowledged as one distinctive and unique Chinese form of governmentality through volunteering, to what extent is foreign diplomacy a hidden agendum of international volunteering due to the current geopolitics? This will bring the debates on politics of moralising tourism further. In particular, the different political ideologies in mainland China and the rest of the Region would mean different forms of responsabilisation and result in different kinds of moral subjects. Querying how moral subjects are produced and the rationalities

embodied through these moral subjects based on the notion of quality in this cultural-political context will further contribute to a more holistic theoretical framework for understanding volunteer tourism.

Another direction for further research is informed by the generational difference. There is a long history of wealthy families in Hong Kong setting up philanthropic foundations which support poverty alleviation and education, especially in China (Cheung, 2016); overseas Chinese also have returned for philanthropic activities in mainland China regularly (Peterson, 2005). Meanwhile, the aging population profile in more developed countries sees the emergence of 'grey nomads' who are interested in travel as a medium for self-expressions (Ong et al., 2014). The rise of this niche group further drives the growth of volunteer tourism. With the rise of the new wealthy in China, the moral landscape in contemporary Greater China Region becomes more complex. This invites further discussion on how philanthropic activity is strategised by different generations. Based on these developments, it offers an avenue for further research on the underlying values driving the participation in philanthropic activities and the geography of care and responsibilities.

## **7.4 Concluding remarks**

Singh and Singh (2005) have suggested that 'all forms of social living are a reflection of prevailing times, and tourism is no exception' (p. 119). As we have discussed above, volunteer tourism offers a lens to different dimensions of the wider society, and we have gained some insights by examining the relationship between the growth of volunteer tourism as a form of travelling experience and a search for meaning and meaningful relationships. Following the increasing discussion on global challenges, this social trend will continue to grow if volunteer tourism is conceived as a development tool. This form of travel will also continue to thrive if the existing perceived social problems remain. We would then need to shift to think how volunteer tourism can be developed as an appropriate course of action in the journey towards global equality, stability and sustainability. It would also be helpful to rethink social relationships and how to cultivate a renewed sense of social interconnectedness towards a sustainable end. If hope is placed on volunteer tourism as an ethical action to cause the person to act morally, it would be useful to explore how such kind of experiences can help cultivate ethical sensibilities which will lead to potentially productive responses to generate some solutions to the global challenges through building and re-connecting and consolidating web of social relationships.

This study shows an attempt to move towards something instead of moving away from something, as Pritchard et al. (2011) have suggested. It is neither to tone down the criticism or cynicism towards volunteer tourism as a form of travelling, nor romanticising volunteer tourism as a highly ethical activity; it aims to open up theoretical pathways through which we analyse this subject of interest, or widen the conceptual basis of this

field of study, as well as garnering broader but nuanced understanding of social life in a global sense. More broadly, this study has contributed to advancing the discussion to predominately neglected geographical and cultural dimensions of the matter of discussion. It further encourages researchers to articulate the dialogue and concern over the role of tourism in shaping beauty and virtue in the world, as Fennell (2006b) has advocated, through deeper philosophically-informed discussions of ethics and morality, both in the scholarly engagement and practice.





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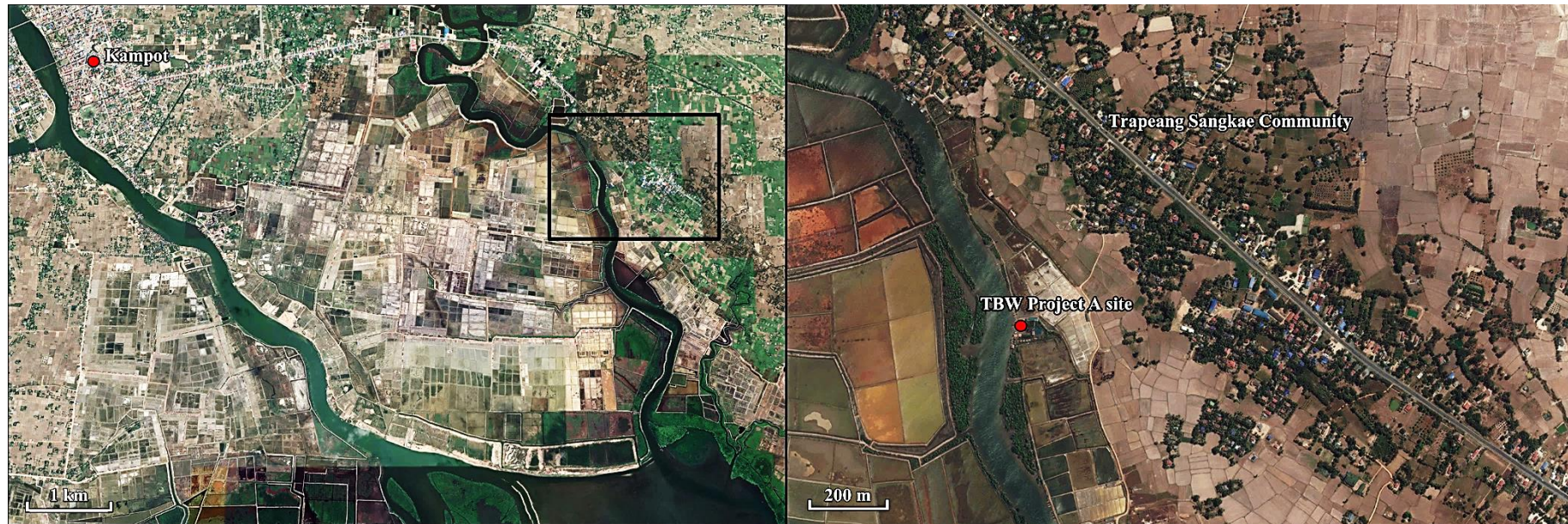
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## Appendix 1 Maps showing the ‘village’ contexts and their distance from urban centres



*Appendix 1a. TBW Project A site in Trapeang Sangkae Community, Kampot  
The point on the left map indicates the Kampot city centre.*



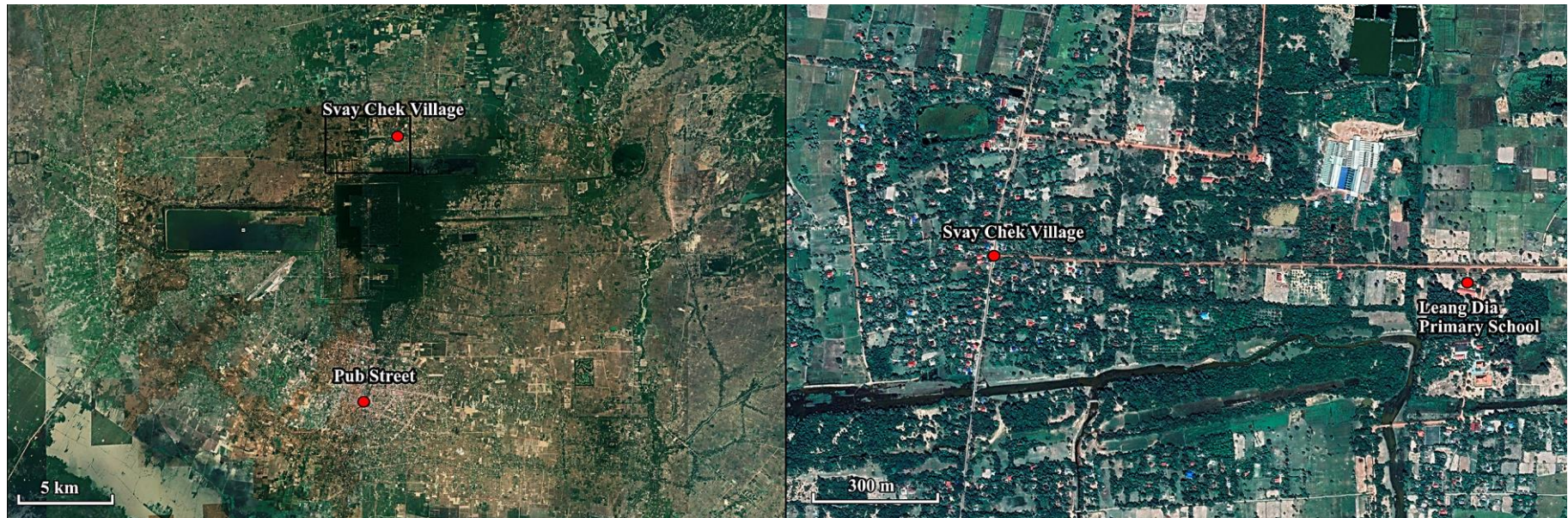




*Appendix 1b. TBW Project B site in Tanoun Village, Tnaot Commune, Takeo  
When I travelled from visit Project B, Tramkhna Market was the closest bus drop-off point from Tnaot Commune (about 20km).*







*Appendix 1c. ELIV's project site in Svay Chek Village*  
*Pub Street is the most touristy area in the Siem Reap city centre*



## Appendix 2 List of informants

Count	Name	Gender	Religion	Count	Name	Gender	Religion
HK01	Adam	Male	Nil	TW01	Vera	Female	N/A
HK02	Bella	Female	Nil	TW02	Wendy	Female	N/A
HK03	Charlotte	Female	Nil	TW03	Xena	Female	N/A
HK04	Daphane	Female	Protestant	TW04	York	Male	N/A
HK05	Ethan	Male	Nil	TW05	Zoe	Female	Buddhism
HK06	Florence	Female	Nil	TW06	Amelie	Female	N/A
HK07	Gloria	Female	Protestant	TW07	Bosco	Male	N/A
HK08	Helen	Female	Nil	TW08	Camellia	Female	N/A
HK09	Ilsa	Female	Buddhism	TW09	Dawn	Female	Protestant
HK10	Jasmine	Female	Protestant	TW10	Erica	Female	N/A
HK11	Kathleen	Female	Catholic	TW11	Felicia	Female	Taoism
HK12	Lorraine	Female	Protestant	TW12	Gwendolyn	Female	Protestant
HK13	Melanie	Female	Protestant	TW13	Hestia	Female	Buddhism & Taoism
HK14	Nicky	Male	Nil				
HK15	Ona	Female	Nil				
HK16	Polly	Female	Nil				
HK17	Quinn	Male	Protestant				
HK18	Rachel	Female	Nil				
HK19	Selina	Female	Nil				
HK20	Tracy	Female	Nil				
HK21	Ulissa	Female	Nil				